MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

EDITED BY

GEORGE SAMPSON

PITT PRESS SHAKESPEARE

The Pitt Press Shakespeare

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Cambridge University Press
Fetter Lane, London

New York
Bombay, Calcutta, Madras
Toronto
Macmillan

Tokyo
Maruzen Company, Ltd

SHAKESPEARE

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EDITED BY

GEORGE SAMPSON, M.A.

ST JOHN'S COLLEGE

CAMBRIDGE

AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

1931

First Edition 1923
Reprinted 1927
" 1931

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

PREFACE

THE present edition of *Much Ado About Nothing* has been prepared for those whom choice or necessity inclines towards a text with a full commentary. Those who dislike anything beyond a plain text are reminded that nothing compels them to use an annotated edition. They may also be reminded that the text of Shakespeare is rarely "plain." The plainest of texts will usually be found to contain less Shakespeare and more editor than the reader may suppose. Of course the whole body of annotation contained in such a volume as this is not meant for readers of one type or age or capacity. The explanation needed by *A* is unnecessary to *B*; the discussion that may interest *C* will be outside the range of *D*. And so on. I have tried to make the appeal as wide as possible, and to interest those who read alone as well as those who have the advantage of tutors.

The volume follows the general plan of those prepared by Mr A. W. Verity for this series. Some few peculiarities may be noted.

(1) The Introduction includes an apparently irrelevant account of Shakespearean bibliography. I hope this will be recognised as useful and appropriate. Many young students begin a detailed examination of a play without the least notion of how the text of Shakespeare has come down to us, and with a tendency to think that every stop or stage-direction in a modern edition is entitled to respect as Shakespeare's own. Further, they do not understand why there should be many textual problems in Shakespeare and next to none in Milton. Such discussion of the matter as I have been able to give is very elementary, but it may help to prevent the student from supposing that the volume called Shakespeare has reached us in the same way as the volume called Wordsworth.

(2) The present text is much more conservative than that usually given in a students' edition. Except in spelling it reproduces with very few departures the text of the one Quarto (1600); and where that edition will give sense I have kept to it, and have rejected some time-honoured emendations. Examples will be found at I. 1. 53, I. 1. 135, II. 1. 42, II. 2. 32, III. 1. 45, IV. 1. 200, V. 1. 16, V. 2. 78. I have retained as a now traditional convenience the eighteenth century division of the text into Acts and Scenes; but I have constantly reminded the student that Q. has no divisions of any kind and that F. has bare division into Acts. I have further reminded him that the scenic directions as to place have no authority and certainly no importance. I have followed as closely as possible the original stage-directions, but I have normalised the speech-headings. Thus Leonato's brother is sometimes *Bro.*, sometimes *brother*, sometimes *Antho.*, sometimes *Ant.* I have kept to one form. We may properly retain in its place *Enter Leonato, and the Constable and the Headborough*, but we need not put *Head.* for *Verges* at the beginning of that officer's speeches in that single scene.

(3) The spelling is, with some important exceptions, the spelling of to-day. Nothing appears to be gained (in such an edition as this) by a reproduction of such forms as "A kind ouerflow of kindneſſe, how much better is it to weepe at ioy, then to ioy at weeping?" or, "He ſet vp his bills here in Meſſina, and my vncles foole reading the chalenge, etc." There are, however, places where the old spelling, or something like it, appears an advantage. Thus, the old texts use such forms as *stufft*, *approacht*, *markt*, which are at least as good as *stuff'd*, *approach'd*, *mark'd*, and better than *stuffed*, *approached*, *marked*. I have kept them; but I have not kept *likt* for *lik'd*, *daunst* for *danc'd* or *hopte* for *hop'd*; nor have I kept such forms as *praisde*, *confirmd*, *kild*, *challengde*, *wrongd*, etc. What I have done very carefully is to retain, in a clear form, every

elision and every no-elision of Q. *When the present text is inconsistent in its elisions the inconsistency is that of the original.* This is important, because some persons (notably Mr Bayfield) maintain that many of the elisions printed in Q. and F. were not intended by Shakespeare, and were made by the printers. Shakespeare (we are assured) did not write such forms as *entred* for *entered*, *heele* for *he will*, *dang'rous* for *dangerous*, but meant all the syllables to be pronounced; nevertheless the printers, not recognising the poet's fondness for the resolved foot, struck out what appeared to them superfluous syllables. This is a highly debatable doctrine which we cannot even begin to discuss here; but we should point out that the old texts are most inconsistent. In the present play, for instance, the word *loved* appears in different places as *loued*, *lou'd*, *lou'de* without any discoverable cause of difference. What are we to make of such lines as these?

> But I perswaded them, if they lou'de Benedicke.
> But mine and mine I loued, and mine I praisde.
> In the rare semblance that I lou'd it first.

We cannot found a theory on such differences; we can only admit that there is an inconsistency, *and reproduce it*, so that the reader whose ear demands the filling out of apparently shortened syllables may feel certain that in the text before him he has no editorial meddling with the original.

(4) I have reverted to the old punctuation. The stops in the text are almost exactly those of Q., with an occasional loan from F. where that second thought has appeared better. We need not discuss here the recent theory of Shakespearean punctuation; we need only say that modern punctuation is grammatical and logical and that Shakespearean punctuation appears to be rhetorical. Thus in modern texts a certain speech in this play is printed:

> This man said, sir, that Don John, the prince's brother, was a villain.

But no one talks in gasps like that! Q. and F. print it thus:

> This man said sir, that Don John the prince's brother was a villain.

Isn't that just how most people would say it? But, after all, the main defence of our reversion is that the punctuation in the text is the original printed punctuation. Those who wish to vary it can do so; but they will have the satisfaction of knowing that they are working with the original data. Personally, I find that the old punctuation, odd as it looks, makes the reading easier. The matter is mentioned again in the Introduction.

An editor of Shakespeare is in the debt of all preceding editors back to Rowe himself. I have consulted (I hope with the right proportion of profit and honesty) the modern editions of F. S. Boas, J. C. Smith, W. A. Wright and K. Deighton; but I am, of course, very specially indebted to the massive Variorum Edition of Horace Howard Furness, simply because it assembles what nearly everybody has ever said about the play. Nevertheless I have been rash enough to differ from all of these in places; especially where an original reading has been restored.

For valuable help most generously given I offer very cordial thanks to Dr F. S. Boas, to Mr A. W. Pollard, to Mr F. Tavani, to Dr William Thomson, and, above all, to my wife, who has helped me in many ways, but specially by making the translation of Bandello's story printed in the Appendix. Strangely enough, although this story is a Shakespearean source at first or second hand, it now appears for the first time with its ingenuous Italian put into plain English for general circulation.

GEORGE SAMPSON.

PORTOFINO,
10 *August*, 1923

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INTRODUCTION

(I) PUBLICATION OF THE PLAY

THE first appearance of *Much Ado About Nothing* in the world of printed books took place, as far as we know, in 1600, when the political adventures of Essex were troubling the last years of Queen Elizabeth. It came out, like some other of Shakespeare's plays, as a small paper-covered quarto pamphlet, costing fivepence or sixpence, and containing seventy-two pages of rather ill-printed matter.

Overleaf is the title-page.

Apparently it was never reprinted alone, and its next appearance was in the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays, the famous First Folio, published in 1623, seven years after the author's death. It there stands sixth in the group of Comedies and occupies twenty-one pages. The Catalogue or Index calls it *Much adoo about Nothing*; the heading in the text calls it *Much adoe about Nothing*.

The official birth of the play as a book is recorded thus in the Stationers' Register (see Arber's *Transcript*, vol. III, p. 37), the year being 1600:

my lord chamberlens menns plaies Entred

viz

27 May 1600 To master Robertes — *A moral of clothe breches and velvet hose*

27 May To hym — *Allarum to London* /

4. Augusti

As you like yt / a booke
HENRY the FFIFT / a booke
Euery man in his humour / a booke
The commedie of muche A doo about nothing a booke /
} to be staied

Later in the record (Arber, III. 170) we have this entry under the year "42 Regin." that is, 1600:

Much adoe about Nothing.

As it hath been ſundrie times publikely
acted by the right honourable, the Lord
Chamberlaine his ſeruants.

Written by William Shakeſpeare.

LONDON
Printed by V. S. for Andrew Wiſe, and
William Aſpley.
1600.

23. Augusti

Andrew Wyse
William Aspley

Entred for their copies vnder
the handes of the wardens
Two bookes. the one called
Muche a Doo about nothinge.
Thother *the second parte of
the history of kinge HENRY the
IIIJth with the humours of Sir
John Ffallstaff:* Wrytten by master
Shakespere.................xijd

A notable entry, for it is the first time that our greatest poet's name appears in the Stationers' Register.

(II) HOW A PLAY CAME INTO PRINT

(1) *Piracy and Copyright*

There are matters arising from these entries that need explanation. The explanation will take us some distance from the play under immediate discussion; but it may be useful in showing the student how a play of Shakespeare came into print and why the text is in places uncertain.

Shakespeare did not publish his plays as Mr Bernard Shaw and Sir James Barrie publish theirs. The reader beginning a study of Shakespeare must dismiss from his mind not merely his usual ideas of a theatre and a stage, but also such ideas as he may have about the modern publication of books, the rights of authors, and the preparation of manuscripts for the press.

If, taking 1922 as our base, we go back a century, we find ourselves in the year of Shelley's death and Matthew Arnold's birth. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb and Hazlitt are in their maturity; Tennyson is 13, Browning and Dickens 10. We are clearly in the world of modern literature. If we go back still another century, to 1722, we are in the great days of Swift and Defoe, we are in the Augustan age of English prose. If we go back a century more, to 1622, we are on the eve of the First Folio itself. That is to say, from our own point in time, we can look back over three rich and crowded centuries of modern printed literature.

But notice how the scene changes when we begin with Shakespeare himself. He was born in 1564. If we go back a century, we are in the very infancy of printing. The earliest-known printed document with a date is an Indulgence of 1454. To 1456 belongs the first printed book of any importance, a great Latin Bible, undated, the earliest known dated book being the Psalter of 1457. All these came from Mainz, which some have called the cradle of typography, although printing, possibly in a cruder form, may have been practised earlier in Holland. In 1464 there was no printing press in Italy or France or Switzerland or Spain—certainly none in England. The first book printed in English is *The Recuyell of the historyes of Troye*, produced by Caxton at Bruges about 1475. In the next year he set up his press at Westminster, and in 1477 produced *The dictes or sayengis of the philosophhres*, the first dated book to be printed in England. A century and a quarter separate the *Troy Book* and *Much Ado*, and in that period the development of English printing was both great and rapid. Still, even in 1600, there was not, as now, a solid, settled tradition of printed literature—there was no large, expectant reading-public, as numerous, almost, as the adult and adolescent population itself. But there was something else. Obviously, before the days of printing there could be no large circulation of books. The medieval world hadn't a great reading-public, but it had a very great listening-public. Literature made its appeal through voice and ear, not, as now, solely through the eye, and the poet's invocation was not, "Read, mark, learn," but "Lesteneth, lordinges, both elde and yinge." In the days of the minstrels there was no large circulation of poems, but there was quite a considerable circulation of poets. Even in 1600, despite a century and a quarter of printing, there was, as well as a reading-public, a great listening-public, some of it technically illiterate in our sense, but bred in the tradition of generations quick to follow the story or take the points in lay of minstrel or homily of priest. A play of Shakespeare was written for people who knew how to listen. It was first of all a thing heard with the ears, and only secondarily a thing read with the eyes: it was a

story set to the music of words delivered by skilled performers. To-day, the art of listening is so far lost, that neither actors nor audiences seem to care about the difference between verse and prose; and only in a theatre with a specific Shakespearean tradition will you feel the intimate sympathy between speaker and hearer that is the first postulate of Shakespearean drama. A performance of Verdi's opera is often closer to the spirit of *Othello* than a performance of Shakespeare's own play.

But the nearness of Shakespeare to the dawn of printing has helped to create difficulties rather more material. In the sixteenth century, print was so far still a new thing, that there was no sound tradition of law about it. If on the production of a new play by Mr Galsworthy you engage a few shorthand writers to take down the text as spoken, and then rush off and publish the matter thus obtained, you will find yourself in painful conflict with the law of copyright. If someone allows you to see the manuscript of a new story by Mr Kipling, and you make a copy of it, and proceed to publish it without the author's permission, you will again find yourself in conflict with the law, and your "stolne and surreptitious copies" will be instantly confiscated and destroyed. But in the sixteenth century such piratical deeds were quite possible, and were sometimes performed; for there was no law of copyright and no clear notion of literary trespass. Obviously, until printing made the multiplication and sale of books a commercial possibility, an author's work had no pecuniary value (beyond the sum he might expect to receive from a prosperous patron, if he had one) and the question of property rights could scarcely arise. Even when printed books began to come steadily into existence, the notion that literature (as distinguished from almanacs and school books) was something worth stealing or protecting grew but slowly; for, as long as the reading-public was small, a publisher would rather produce something new and original than reproduce something already known in print.

The first sign of a copyright appears in the form of a privilege (or monopoly) granted to the printer by the king. Mr A. W. Pollard, in his lectures called *Shakespeare's*

Fight with the Pirates (Cambridge, 1920), states that one of the earliest known appearances of a privilege for an English printed book is in the Latin sermon preached by Richard Pace at St Paul's Cathedral on the Peace between England and France. This was printed by Pynson, who finished it on the 13th of November, 1518, and stated at the end of the colophon (in Latin) that it was issued with a privilege granted by the king forbidding anyone else to reprint it for the space of two years. This, in effect, was the grant of a two years' copyright to Pynson and also an admission that after two years anyone so minded might reprint the piece.

(2) *Royal Control of the Press*

But presently the sovereign powers of the realm began to take notice of books in another way. On the Continent, the new art of printing very soon became involved with the politico-religious disturbance known as the Reformation. Books were powerful weapons in the conflict, and had therefore to be controlled. Royal proclamations containing lists of prohibited books began to be issued here in 1529. In 1538 an important proclamation declares that, owing to the growth of obnoxious books, the importation, sale or publication of works printed abroad is prohibited without his Majesty's special licence; further, that no books shall be printed here till they have been examined by some of the Privy Council or other appointed persons; and also that printers, having received licence to print, shall not use the words *Cum privilegio regali* without adding *ad imprimendum solum*, and declaring in English the fact and meaning of the licence.

(3) *The Stationers' Company*

The first point to notice about this proclamation is that it establishes a censorship of books; and the next is that the words *ad imprimendum solum*, whatever they were originally intended to signify, came later (says Mr Pollard) to be interpreted as meaning "for sole, or exclusive printing." That this is so is evident from the passage in *The Taming of the Shrew* (IV. 4. 91) where Biondello says:

I cannot tell; expect they are busied about a counterfeit assurance: take you assurance of her, *cum privilegio ad imprimendum solum*, to the church.

See further a paper by A. W. Reed, *Trans. Bibliog. Soc.* xv. In 1557 came the most important event in the early history of English printing, the grant of a Charter by Queen Mary to the Stationers' Company, vesting them with all the legal powers and privileges of a Corporation and giving them greater authority over the whole book trade. That is, the Stationers' Company (which became in 1560 one of the liveried companies of the City) received the monopoly of publishing books, the expected return being the zeal of the members in hunting out and dragging into publicity the secret presses to which desperate Reformers were driven to resort.

Under the rules of the Company every member was required to enter in the register the name of any book or copy which he claimed as his property and desired to print, paying, at the same time, a fee for the entry....By their charter the Stationers were empowered to search the premises of any printer or stationer to see that nothing was printed contrary to regulations, and, accordingly, searchers were appointed to make weekly visits to printing houses....But the attentions of the Company were not confined to illegal productions; the brethren themselves were well looked after, and the accounts of fines received for breaking of orders and other offences show that a vigorous supervision was maintained. (*Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* vol. IV, chap. xviii.)

It will be seen that, apart from all other forms of censorship, the Stationers' Company became a sort of licensing authority; for the Government henceforth had only to issue its decrees as instructions to the Master and Wardens to be sure that commercial zeal would be used in giving them effect. As to the differences in Shakespeare's time between the offices of printer, publisher and bookseller, it may briefly be said that, under the rules of the Company, it was difficult to become a printer and comparatively easy to become a publisher or bookseller; that all printers were publishers, but that many publishers were not printers. See further on this point the essay "Booksellers, Printers and the Stationers' Trade," by R. B. McKerrow in *Shakespeare's England*, vol. II.

(4) *Position of the Author*

So far the author has not come into our story. The right to produce a work was given by the Stationers' Company to the publisher who entered it in the Register. The author, as such, had no rights, and had to make what terms he could with the publisher. The one thing necessary for the publisher was actual possession of a manuscript that he could enter in the Register. Unless some powerful person took up the matter, the terms upon which he obtained it were nobody's business but his own. Now it was not always the author who provided enterprising publishers with desirable manuscripts. The Elizabethan noblemen and gentlemen who, after the agreeable fashion of those spacious days, wrote poems, usually "amatorious" and sometimes "vaine," circulated manuscript copies of their efforts among their friends, and apparently uttered no protest when those friends made copies for themselves as a personal possession. Some one of those friends, over-enthusiastic and not over-scrupulous, possessing a manuscript work by some notable person, might be persuaded to part with the treasure to a solicitous publisher, who would enter it in the Register as his copy and proceed to publish it. How an author without powerful friends or influence could interfere is difficult to see. He might never hear of the publication till the book was actually in existence. He could not claim that multiplication was unlawful, as there was no law; moreover, if it was allowable for friends to make copies with a pen, was it not allowable for other friends to make copies with type? Apparently his only remedy was to declare the piratical publication false and faulty and produce a better one himself.

(5) *The Pirating of Plays*

Plays were, by the nature of things, very easy to steal, as they were public in performance and could be taken down more or less accurately by ear. Whatever there may have been before, there was by 1608 a practical system of shorthand.

A popular play (says Mr Aldis) was sure of finding a ready sale, and a stationer on the look out for vendible copy, if he could obtain an acting copy of a favourite play, or procure a shorthand writer to take notes during the performance, would have little regard to the wishes of either playwright or players. (*Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit. cap. cit.*)

Piracy in the printing of plays is a theme of frequent complaint, the classic reference being that in the address *To the great Variety of Readers* prefixed to the First Folio Shakespeare of 1623:

It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to have bene wished, that the Author himselfe had liv'd to have set forth, and overseen his own writings; But since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his Friends, the office of their care, and paine, to have collected and publish'd them; and so to have publish'd them, as where (before) you were abus'd with diverse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of injurious impostors, that expos'd them: even those, are now offer'd to your view cur'd, and perfect of their limbes; and all the rest, absolute in their numbers, as he conceived them.

Two other striking passages are worth quoting, both complaints of the dramatist Thomas Heywood. The first is the preface to *The Rape of Lucrece* (1608):

To the Reader.—It hath beene no custome in mee of all other men (courteous Reader) to commit my plaies to the presse: the reason though some may attribute to my owne insufficiencie, I had rather subscribe in that to their seveare censure than by seeking to avoide the imputation of weaknes to incurre greater suspition of honestie: for though some have used a double sale of their labours, first to the Stage, and after to the presse, For my owne part I heere proclaime my selfe ever faithfull in the first, and never guiltie of the last: yet since some of my plaies have (unknowne to me, and without any of my direction) accidentally come into the Printers hands, and therefore so corrupt and mangled, (coppied only by the eare) that I have bin as unable to know them, as ashamed to chalenge them, This therefore, I was the willinger to furnish out in his native habit: first being by consent, next because the rest have beene so wronged in being publisht in such savadge and ragged ornaments: accept it courteous Gentlemen, and proove as favorable Readers as we have found you gratious Auditors. Yours T.H.

The second passage occurs among the pieces in Heywood's *Pleasant Dialogues and Dramma's* (1637). This is headed:

A Prologue to the Play of Queene Elizabeth as it was last revived at the Cock-pit, in which the Author taxeth the most corrupted copy now imprinted, which was published without his consent.

PROLOGUE.

Playes have a fate in their conception lent,
Some so short liv'd, no sooner shew'd, than spent;
But borne to-day, to morrow buried, and
Though taught to speake, neither to goe nor stand.
This: (by what fate I know not) sure no merit,
That it disclaimes, may for the age inherit.
Writing 'bove one and twenty; but ill nurst,
And yet receiv'd, as well perform'd at first,
Grac't and frequented, for the cradle age,
Did throng the Seates, the Boxes, and the Stage
So much; that some by Stenography drew
The plot: put it in print: (scarce one word trew:)
And in that lamenesse it hath limp't so long,
The Author now to vindicate that wrong
Hath tooke the paines, upright upon its feete
To teache it walke, so please you sit, and see't.

(Reprinted in Bang, *Materialien, etc.*, vol. III.)

A play, as we have said, for the Elizabethan person, was something to be heard and witnessed, before it was something to be read and possessed. In his note *To the Reader* prefixed to *The Malcontent* (1604) John Marston thus complains:

Only one thing afflicts me, to think that scenes, invented merely to be spoken, should be enforcively published to be read, and that the least hurt I can receive is to do myself the wrong. But, since others otherwise would do me more, the least inconvenience is to be accepted. I have myself, therefore, set forth this comedy.

Statements of this kind, however, could easily become a pose, and mean as little as the abject humility of dedications.

(6) *Lawful Publication by the Actors*

A dramatic author sold his play to the actors, not to the publishers; and a company of actors possessing a good play

would be as unwilling to have it staled in print as modern comedians to have their "patter" published for rivals tc imitate. There is some reason, however, to believe that the players themselves, desiring to forestall suspected piracy, or to raise money in lean times, arranged the publication of a play.

On 22nd July, 1598, the players instructed James Roberts, the printer of their playbills, to prevent the piracy of *The Merchant of Venice* by entering it on the Stationers' Register with the proviso "that yt bee not printed by the said James Robertes or anye other whatsoever without lycence first had from the Right honorable the lord Chamberlen."

Thus Mr Pollard (*Shakespeare's Fight*, etc.), interpreting the bare facts of the Register.

In 1600 the Chamberlain's men apparently had reason to fear piracy, and, owing to the Order in Council of 22nd of June restricting their performances to two a week, were more inclined to sell. They therefore themselves, on 4th of August, "stayed" *As you like it*, *Henry V*, and *Much Ado about Nothing*, only to find that *Henry V* had already been pirated by Thomas Millington and John Busby. *As you like it* they prevented from being printed at all, but they sold *Much Ado* to Andrew Wise and William Aspley, and with it *The second part of Henry IV*. (POLLARD, *Shakespeare's Fight*, etc.)

That is to say, on the 4th August, 1600, the players registered themselves as the owners of certain books to be published, though publication was "stayed," or not to be proceeded with until further notice. This was what is called in Parliamentary circles a "blocking motion"; for even if the players did not proceed at once to publication, they could reckon on throwing some obstacles in the way of any piratically-minded person who tried to forestall them. By 23rd August they had definitely decided to sell, and accordingly parted with the manuscript of the plays *Much Ado* and *Henry IV*, *Part II* to Wise and Aspley, who, having paid the fee of "xijd" and received the Company's licence, had *Much Adoe about Nothing* printed by V. S., i.e. Valentine Sims.

(III) POSITION OF THE PLAYERS

Let us assume that the title-page of the present play and the entry in the Stationers' Register have been sufficiently explained. Two further points now come up for consideration: first, who were "My lord chamberlens menn," and next, what was the nature of the manuscript which they sold?

(1) *Plays as Propaganda*

First as to the players. In modern times we are accustomed to the licensing of buildings—theatres, music-halls, etc., and a censorship of plays. In the sixteenth century the players themselves had to be officially recognised. During the troubled years when England was in a state of transition from its old Roman allegiance to its new self-determination in church government, the old miracle plays and the newer morality plays and interludes, with their strong ecclesiastical and doctrinal flavour, were powerful pro-Roman influences among a populace to whom the play was what the cheap book or picture paper or cinema is to the populace of to-day. There were, of course, plays with the opposite tendency. When a royal enactment said one thing and a popular play said something different, the play would always be more potent in the general mind. The proclamation might control a few outward actions; the play would colour the mind and feelings. How could this difficulty be met? The censorship over books was fairly thorough; but, in spite of it, such incendiary publications as the Martin Marprelate tracts managed to slip into existence and exert their powerful influence. Moreover, the non-reading, play-frequenting public was unaffected by all ordinances against books. What remained, therefore, was to establish a censorship of dramatic performances, and this seemed to promise most success if it took the form of a censorship of players.

(2) *Licensing of Players*

Accordingly a statute of Queen Elizabeth's reign (1572) thus enacts:

And for the full expressing what persone and persones shalbe intended within this Braunche to be Roges Vacaboundes and Sturdye Beggers, to have and receave the punyshement aforesaid for the said lewde maner of Lyef; It ys nowe publyshed... and set foorth...That...all Fencers Bearewardes Comon Players in Enterludes & Minstrels, not belonging to any Baron of this Realme or towardes any other honorable Personage of greater Degree...whiche...shall wander abroade and have not Lycense of two Justices of the Peace at the leaste, whereof one to be of the Quorum, wher and in what Shier they shall happen to wander...shalbee taken adjudged and deemed Roges Vacaboundes and Sturdy Beggers, intended by this present Act. (*Shakespeare's England*, vol. II, chap. xxiv.)

(3) *Shakespeare as Player*

The growing power of Puritanism rejoiced in this oppression of persons charged, and sometimes justly, with all manner of evil behaviour. The stage (from behind) has rarely been a school of virtue in any age. People sometimes allege, as an example of life's little ironies, that our greatest poet was no more than a rogue and vagabond in the eyes of the law. That is not true. Shakespeare was a duly recognised actor, one of "a cry of players" under exalted patronage. Moreover, he was author as well as actor, with a share in the Globe and the Blackfriars theatres.

Shakespeare worked throughout his career for one company, the earliest that was formed in accordance with the statute; it was licensed as Lord Leicester's in 1572, became Lord Strange's on the death of its first patron, then the Lord Chamberlain's, and, on the accession of James, the King's men. Other important companies were the Queen's, founded under royal warrant in 1583; the Admiral's, under Lord Howard of Effingham, first mentioned in 1586, and renamed as Prince Henry's in the reign of James I; Lord Worcester's, which became Queen Anne's; and Lord Pembroke's, first mentioned in 1593. It should be noted that, when James succeeded to the throne, all recognised companies passed under royal patronage. (Percy Simpson, *Shakespeare's England*, vol. II, chap. xxiv.)

It has recently been maintained, by the way, that Shakespeare's first company was the Earl of Pembroke's. There were, of course, no women in the companies; the women's parts were played by boys—hence the frequent predilection

of female characters in the plays for the garments and status of male persons--a transformation slightly more convincing when it meant a reversion to sex. How bravely the boys could play may be gathered from the fact that there were other companies of actors entirely composed of boys, notably the "Children of the Chapel," and the "Children of Paul's." They became for a time the rage (as the "Infant Roscius" did in later years) and entered so far into dangerous competition with the "chamberlens menn" that Shakespeare makes indignant reference to the Chapel children at the Blackfriars in a famous passage of *Hamlet* (II. 2. 362–8).

(4) *Players and Respectability*

There is no real inconsistency between Elizabethan patronage of the drama and apparent persecution of the actors. The statute was, in some respects, merely one of the many attempts that have been made in all ages to keep the stage respectable. To-day, when disreputable persons are described in the police-courts as "actresses," and illiterate and seedy ranters describe themselves as "actors," many of the duly accredited members of the profession are desirous of having some form of academic or similar recognition to distinguish them from the unqualified and undesirable element. Shakespeare, let us remember, as one of the Lord Chamberlain's men, and later as one of the King's men, was a legally respectable person.

(IV) A STAGE PLAY

The second question we raised was this: what was the nature of the manuscript which the players sold to the publisher? Here we touch upon a question that arouses some contention among scholars. The main facts, however, can be easily understood.

(1) *Nature of the Manuscript*

We have already seen that publishers could sometimes obtain a pirated copy of a play made from memory or noted down in shorthand. That would be a "stolne and surreptitious" text. The genuine play, sold by the proper

possessors, might be a collection of players' parts, or the "prompt-copy," or the author's original manuscript, or a transcript of it. There has been some controversy upon the question whether the author's original manuscript was used as the prompt-copy, or whether a transcript was made for the use of the producer. It is obvious that these are not exclusive alternatives. Sometimes the original was used, sometimes a copy. We need not enter into any discussion of the matter. Everyone who has taken part in amateur theatricals will know that, if the play to be performed is unprinted, the performers are provided with a type-written "script" of their "parts," with "cues" to indicate the relation of those parts to the speeches of the other performers. Transcripts of the whole play are not given to all the cast; but the producer has a copy of the whole play, and on it are noted the full stage-directions, the "business," the "properties," and so forth. This copy is in daily use at the theatre. Readers of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* will remember that Snug, cast for the lion in *Pyramus and Thisbe*, plaintively says, "Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study"; and that at the first rehearsal Flute doesn't know when to come in or where to stop; for Quince, the "producer," having told him when to begin, at last exclaims, "Why you must not speak that yet; *that* you answer to Pyramus: you speak all your part at once, cues and all." Now the Elizabethan play sold to the publisher might be a collection of the players' parts, to be assembled for printing, or a manuscript of the whole play. Even to-day editors of Elizabethan madrigals have usually to make up their scores from the separate "parts" prepared for the old singers. It is rather unlikely that players' parts would be sold, for these were more valuable in the theatre than a complete copy. Sometimes, it has been suggested, the copy for printing was supplied by one unscrupulous player, who could provide his own part accurately, and the others much less accurately; but that is a refinement we need not discuss here. *The Lanchinge of the Mary* (Brit. Mus. MS. Egerton 1994) is an author's original that has plainly been used as a prompt-copy.

(2) *Provenance of Copy for Much Ado*

The transition of copy from playhouse to printer is clearly marked in the present play, for all through Act IV. Sc. 2, where the stage-direction occurs, "Enter the Constables, Borachio, and the Towne Clearke, in gownes," the names of the two principal *actors* and not of the *characters* are printed—the famous Will Kemp interpreting Dogbery and Richard Cowley Verges. See note on p. 165 for a quoted passage of this scene.

There can be little doubt that the printer of 1600 had a marked theatre copy of the whole play in manuscript (quite possibly Shakespeare's own original script), and set up his pages from that; and there can be equally little doubt that the printer of 1623 had a marked theatre copy of the 1600 printed edition, and set up his pages from that. One interesting variation of text illustrates this. In II. 3, the Quarto of 1600 has the stage-direction: *Enter prince, Leonato, Claudio, Musicke.* The Folio of 1623 has this direction: *Enter Prince, Leonato, Claudio, and Iacke Wilson*—"Iacke Wilson" evidently being the singer of the song "Sigh no more, ladies." The Folio, it should be noted, follows the Quarto in printing the names of actors instead of characters in IV. 2. The two texts differ surprisingly little when we consider the interval of twenty-three years in which stage "business" or "gags" might easily have become accreted upon the original copy. A possible inference is that the play was not so frequently performed as we might suppose. The text printed here is mainly that of the Quarto (1600) with a few details of punctuation, etc. taken from the Folio. The latter, on the whole, gives a distinctly inferior text.

(V) THE DATE OF *MUCH ADO*

So far, we have watched (at some length) the progress of *Much Ado about Nothing* from the theatre in 1600 to its first printer in the same year. What is its history as a play before it became a printed book?

(1) *The List of Francis Meres*

The chief external authority for the dating of Shakespeare's early plays is the list given in *Palladis Tamia, Wits Treasury*, by Francis Meres (1598), a collection of choice utterances on art and morals by famous authors, mostly ancient, together with some slightly precious observations and comparisons by the author himself. The following passage, taken from the section called *A Comparative Discourse of our English Poets with the Greeke, Latine, and Italian Poets*, is the most important:

> As the soule of *Euphorbus* was thought to live in *Pythagoras*: so the sweete wittie soule of Ovid lives in mellifluous & hony-tongued *Shakespeare*, witnes his *Venus* and *Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugred Sonnets among his private friends, &c.
>
> As *Plautus* and *Seneca* are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines: so *Shakespeare* among ye English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for Comedy, witnes his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Love labors lost*, his *Love labours wonne*, his *Midsummers night dreame* & his *Merchant of Venice*: for Tragedy his *Richard the 2*, *Richard the 3*, *Henry the 4*, *King Iohn*, *Titus Andronicus*, and his *Romeo and Iuliet*.
>
> As *Epius Stolo* said, that the Muses would speake with *Plautus* tongue if they would speak Latin: so I say that the Muses would speak with *Shakespeares* fine filed phrase, if they would speake English.

(2) *Love's Labour's Won*

Now there is no surviving play called *Love's Labour's Won*, and ingenious scholars have tried to prove that it is this or that play under another name. Almost every play for which we have no positive evidence of date has been identified with it, and *Much Ado* is, of course, one of the identifications. It may, however, be said decisively that the title *Love's Labour's Won* fits the plot of *Much Ado* scarcely at all, certainly not so well as it fits (for instance) the stories of *All's Well* or *The Tempest*. We assume, therefore, that *Much Ado* is not that mysterious comedy, a conclusion that leaves the evidence for date still negative, for the play may have existed when Meres wrote and have been omitted from his balanced list of six comedies and

six tragedies. This is not very probable as Meres seems to delight in quoting multitudes of instances. The title-page of 1600 states that the play had been "sundrie times publikely acted by the right honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his servants," and it must, therefore, have been in existence before the middle of that year. Attempts have been made to date it more exactly from supposed allusions in the text. For instance, the battle referred to at the opening of the play is related (not very convincingly) to the campaign of Essex in Ireland in 1599, and the preoccupation of the Watch about one "Deformed" during III. 3 is connected with a character in Ben Jonson's "*Cynthia's Revels, or the Fountaine of Selfe-Love, a Comicall Satyre. First acted in the yeere* 1600. *By the then Children of Queen Elizabeth's Chappell.*" In this there is one, "AMORPHUS, or the *deformed*; a traveller that drunke of the fountain, and there tells the wonders of the water." The fact that Ben Jonson's Amorphus has not been, like the Watch's man, "a vile theefe this vii yeares" is, of course, no argument against the identification. The Watch is not supposed to be intelligent. Unfortunately, it is hard to see how a play sold to the printer in August, 1600, after "sundrie" performances, can make an allusion to another play first acted in 1600. It is barely possible, however, if Ben Jonson's piece was acted early in the year, for there are certain indications of haste in *Much Ado* that incline one to place its composition not very long before publication. But I think it very improbable that there is any allusion. Really, apart from the title-page, there is no direct evidence for date. All we can say is that the general air of fresh maturity warrants a supposition that the play (as it now exists) was put together about 1599–1600. The very first scene of "flyting" between Beatrice and Benedick is the work of no prentice hand. Rosaline and Biron talk like brilliant youngsters sparring in an exhibition match; Beatrice and Benedick wield dangerous weapons in the serious and eternal duel of sex.

(VI) SHAKESPEARE'S ORIGINALITY

Another question arises. Was Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing* the first Elizabethan play to tell its particular story? We may answer, Probably not; though there is no existing play producible as its groundwork. Young students, with the practice of the modern stage in mind, sometimes find a difficulty in understanding how Shakespeare can be an original genius if he found his material in the work of other men. A modern playgoer who goes to see a new piece by a popular author always expects something new whatever he may actually get. If the play is really new and serious it may run for a few weeks; if it is much less new and much less serious it may run for a few years. But the Elizabethan Londoner knew nothing of "runs." He wanted a frequent change of fare, and he hadn't forty theatres to choose among: he had three or four. The companies, therefore, needed a large repertory of plays, and new, or at least freshened pieces had to be regularly forthcoming. Students must not think of an Elizabethan dramatist as a person like his modern counterpart, who works at leisure and as the spirit moves him. They must rather think of the Elizabethan theatre as a roaring loom of drama, at which new plays were woven with great speed, and by which old plays were patched, freshened and joined up for immediate use, several hands, sometimes, contributing to the processes. Successful dramatic authorship in Elizabethan times consisted not in the ability to produce one "new and original drama of modern life" per annum, but in the ability to adapt or put together a stirring play in a few weeks. Is a new piece wanted? Well, here is a large book, Holinshed's *Chronicles*, full of historical incidents; here is another large book, Plutarch's *Lives*, full of exemplary biographies; here are books of stories, mostly taken from the Italian; here is a pile of old plays, once successful, but now stale and obsolete. Surely, Master Shakespeare, you can do something with all this matter? So Master Shakespeare sets to work and evokes *Macbeth* from Holinshed, *Julius Caesar* from Plutarch, *As You Like It* from Lodge's *Rosalynde* and *King John* from *The*

Troublesome Raigne of King John. There is nothing unusual in this. At the present time, popular show pieces undergo periodical revision, and appear in "a new edition with new songs and costumes." Those who frequent picture palaces must surely, by this time, have come to the conclusion that American film-makers have only one story to tell, however much they vary the names and places. Even the twelve "episodes" of a serial film generally prove to be precisely the same episode with slight variations. The Elizabethan playgoer enjoyed the inevitable complication of lover, first heroine (disguised as a boy), second heroine, who falls in love with the "boy," and second hero who comes in at the end to save the situation, just as heartily as the modern picturegoer enjoys the strong silent man in weeds of the West, the villain of mongrel race, and the child-like daughter of the ranch secretly and strenuously adored by the speechless hero. The Greeks expected in their tragedies nothing but some fresh presentation of

> Thebes, or Pelops' line,
> Or the tale of Troy divine,

already known to them as thoroughly as a child knows Cinderella. Our ancestors in medieval times had apparently a limitless appetite for romances about King Arthur and his Knights, or Charlemagne and his Peers[1]. Even when no audience compelled, the poets took their good stories wherever they found them. Coleridge took *The Ancient Mariner* from a book of travels; Keats took *Endymion* from Lemprière and *Isabella* from Boccaccio; Browning took *The Ring and the Book* from an old yellow volume found on a bookstall; Morris took *The Earthly Paradise* from northern saga and medieval romance and classical legend. A writer's originality is to be judged, not by what he begins with, but by what he ends with. Shakespeare's creative originality appears in his marvellous power of making characters come alive. Hamlet, Lear, Othello, Rosalind,

[1] The Sicilian of twentieth century Palermo has preserved unabated the old fondness for the Roland stories. He sees them at puppet-theatres in sections that take many evenings to perform, and he paints the famous incidents in heroic colours on the panels of his carts.

Portia, Ophelia and the rest are now part of the world's mythology. All civilised readers know them, and that enduring life of theirs is the measure of Shakespeare's originating power. This power is shown again in his capacity not merely for retelling a story well, but for retelling it well in the form of actable drama. There is no one to compare with Shakespeare as a dramatist. He is the best known play-maker of the world. No other dramatist has had so many of his plays performed so frequently in so many countries for so many centuries. The total performances of *Hamlet*, for instance, must far exceed the total performances of any other single play whatsoever. Perhaps the best answer to the young inquirer about Shakespeare's originality is the fact that, for the most part, Shakespeare's sources are remembered solely because they are Shakespeare's sources, and that, apart from him, they have no true life of their own.

The use of known stories for play or poem or picture has another justification:

> In all art, whether literary, pictorial, musical, or architectural, a certain character will be common to a certain age or country. Every age has its stock subjects for artistic treatment; the reason for this is that it is convenient for the reader, spectator, or listener, to be familiar with the main outlines of the story. Written literature is freer in this respect than painting or sculpture, for it can explain, and prepare the reader better for what is coming. Literature which, though written, is intended mainly for recitation before an audience few of whom can read, exists only on condition of its appealing instantly to the understanding, and will, therefore, deal only with what the hearer is supposed already to know in outline. The writer may take any part of the stock national subjects that he or she likes, and within reasonable limits may treat it according to his or her fancy, but it must hitch on to the old familiar story, and hence will arise a certain similarity of style between all poems of the same class that belong to the same age, language, and people. This holds just as good for the mediæval Italian painters as it does for the Epic cycle. They offer us a similarity in dissimilarity and a dissimilarity in similarity. (Samuel Butler, *The Authoress of the Odyssey*, chap. xiv.)

(VII) SHAKESPEARE THE POET

Shakespeare's creative power is shown, too, in the imaginative beauty of his verse. We forget, sometimes, that Shakespeare is not only our greatest dramatist, but our greatest poet. No one but Shakespeare gives us such abundance of the

> Jewels five-words long
> That on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time
> Sparkle for ever.

All notes and stops are at his command, from the majesty of

> This royal throne of Kings, this sceptred isle,

to the simplicity of

> The quality of mercy is not strained;

from the mystery of

> In the dark backward and abysm of time

to the moving cadence of

> We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep;

from the bravery of

> I dare do all that may become a man,

to the dramatic pathos of

> Finish, good lady, the bright day is done,
> And we are for the dark;

from the whispered dread of

> The undiscovered country, from whose bourn
> No traveller returns

to the sweet music of

> Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
> Stands tiptoe on the misty mountains' tops.

Even some common daily word shines out like a gem under his hand, as here:

> Oh Westmoreland, thou art the summer bird
> Which ever in the haunch of winter sings
> The lifting up of day

or here:

Thou hast never in thy life
Shew'd thy poor mother any courtesy;
When she, poor hen, fond of no second brood,
Has cluck'd thee to the wars and safely home
Loaden with honour.

Let the student who has any doubt of Shakespeare's originality read a great Shakespeare play and then the book from which the poet borrowed the plot. If he has any feeling for poetry, drama or character, that should settle the matter for ever.

(VIII) POSSIBLE SOURCES

(1) *An Old Play*

Whatever old play Shakespeare may have worked on has not come down to us. *The Documents relating to the Office of the Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth* (ed. Feuillerat, Louvain, 1908, vol. XXI in *Materialien zur Kunde des älteren Englischen Dramas*, ed. W. Bang) has the following entry under date 18 December, 1574:

Peruzing and Reformyng of playes. The expences and charges wheare my Lord Leicester's menne showed theier matter of panecia. Xs.

Item for A dozen of Lether poyntes iiijd.
Item for iij Torches that nighte iijs.

Furness suggests that "Panecia" stands for "Fenicia"—Fenicia being the counterpart of Hero in the most likely of the sources. If there was a play of which Fenicia was the heroine the fact would be of some importance, for, as we have already pointed out, the Lord Chamberlain's men were originally Lord Leicester's, and therefore may have retained possession of this "Fenicia," and decided, twenty-five years later, to produce a re-written version of the story. But this, however pleasing, is the merest conjecture, for no such play exists, nor, let us repeat, is there any certainty that Shakespeare worked upon this or any other piece. The general plot of *Much Ado* is woven of three parts, the story of Hero and Claudio, the story of Beatrice and Benedick, and the humours of the parish

officers. The third may be dismissed briefly as belonging to the undoubted line of Shakespearean invention. Dogbery is as clearly Shakespeare's own as Bumble is Dickens's.

(2) *Ariosto*

The Hero-Claudio story is almost as old as story-telling itself. In the days of man's possessive tyranny over woman —so unpleasingly illustrated by Hero in *Much Ado*, by Helena in *All's Well* and by Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*—the story of an unfaithful woman discovered in disloyalty and punished by repudiation, or worse, was perennially attractive to the complacent male. Elizabethan readers had more than one story of this kind at their disposal. There was the tale of Genevra (Hero) and Ariodant (Claudio) in Books IV, V and VI of the *Orlando Furioso* by Ariosto (1474–1533), translated by Sir John Harington in 1591. (The spelling of the names here is Harington's.) The Stationers' Register records an even earlier version by Peter Beverley (1566); but this either failed to survive or did not come into printed existence. There are, however, so many important differences that it is absurd to suppose the author of *Much Ado* was indebted directly to Ariosto or his translators for the story. For instance, it is the man Ariodant, not the woman Genevra, who is given out for dead and who reappears at the dramatic moment. The sole point in common is that Dalinda (Margaret) is made by Polinesso (Don John) to impersonate Genevra at a window, and give him entrance to her room. The action takes place in St Andrews, and by Scottish law Genevra is doomed to die by fire in a month unless a knight will fight her accuser. An unknown knight arrives, and the duel is about to be fought, when Rinaldo, mounted on Bayard, rides up, denounces Polinesso's crime, and the unknown knight thereupon discloses himself and proves to be Ariodant, alive and repentant. So much for Ariosto. One play based on the Italian poet's story is known to have existed, though it is now lost. Under date 1582 the Revels' Accounts (already quoted) gives this entry:

A historie of Ariodante and Genevra shewed before her maiestie on Shrove Tuesdaie at night enacted by mr Mulcasters

children, ffor which was newe prepared and Imployed, one Citty, one battlement of Canvas. vij Ells of sarcenet, and ij dozen of gloves. The whole furniture for the reste was of the score of this office. whereof sondrey garmentes for fytting of the children were altered & translated.

Mr Mulcaster's children were the boys of Merchant Taylors' School, and Mr Mulcaster himself is one of the best of our early educationists. A later play, *The Partiall Law*, a version of the same story, was recently found and printed in 1908. For an account of this and the "woman question" in our early drama see the excellent Introduction by F. S. Boas to *Much Ado* (Oxford, 1916).

(3) *Spenser*

Another popular version of the Hero story is that related by Spenser (a pupil of Mulcaster's) in Book II, Canto III of *The Faerie Queene*, published in 1590; but here the differences are even greater, for though Hero (Claribell) is again impersonated by Margaret (Pryene) there is no window, or entering, but a "darksome bowre," into which Claudio (Phaon) is led by Don John (Philemon) where he sees the supposed interview. The wrathful Phaon, presently meeting the real Claribell kills her at once, without a word, and then, discovering his crime, kills Philemon too, and is about to kill Pryene, when he is attacked himself by persons who have no counterparts in *Much Ado*. The resemblance here is the smallest possible. It was Gerard Langbaine in his *Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (1691) who seems first to have suggested Ariosto and Spenser as the source of the plot against Hero. Langbaine was followed by Pope. Two eighteenth century editors of Shakespeare, Capell and Steevens, suggested a much closer parallel.

It is true (writes Steevens) as Mr Pope has observed, that somewhat resembling the story of this play is to be found in the fifth book of the *Orlando Furioso*. In Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Bk II, c. iv, as remote an original may be traced. A novel, however, of Belleforest, copied from another of Bandello, seems to have furnished Shakespeare with his fable, as it approaches nearer in all its particulars to the play before us, than any other performance known to be extant. I have seen

so many versions from this once popular collection that I entertain no doubt but that a great majority of the tales it comprehends have made their appearance in an English dress. Of that particular story which I have just mentioned, viz. the 18th history in the third volume, no translation has hitherto been met with.

One little fact rules out Ariosto and Spenser. In the first speech of the play Shakespeare sets the scene in Messina. Now it was Bandello who first gave the story a Sicilian setting.

(4) *Bandello*

In this quotation from Steevens two names famous in the history of Elizabethan drama are brought to the reader's notice. Italy has been the land of tales since Boccaccio's *Decamerone* was written in 1353—nay, since the *Metamorphoses* were written by Ovid, that Italian of Sulmona in the Abruzzi. Two centuries after Boccaccio, flourished Matteo Bandello, born in Castelnuovo (Piedmont) in 1480. He became a monk and, visiting France, was made Bishop of Agen in 1550. Four years later he published at Lucca the first three volumes of his Boccaccian stories, grave and gay, which became rapidly popular and gained the compliment of almost instant translation. Thus, in 1556–1567 appeared the two volumes of *The Palace of Pleasure* by William Painter, containing a selection of stories from Livy, Herodotus, Aulus Gellius, Boccaccio, Straparola and Bandello—but not the story which is parallel to *Much Ado*. Also, in 1567, appeared Fenton's *Certaine Tragicall Discourses*, containing stories drawn from Bandello—but, again, not the Hero-Claudio story. Painter's collection furnished many a dramatist with plots, but it did not furnish Shakespeare with the story of Hero. Nor did Fenton's. Therefore, if the tale were not extant in some earlier play, Shakespeare must have read or heard the original story writ in choice Italian by Bandello himself. There is nothing intrinsically improbable in that. The Elizabethans were exceedingly Italianate, and Italian was as current among persons of any education as French is to-day. Moreover, Bandello is not hard reading.

(5) *Belleforest*

Shakespeare (as Steevens suggests) might have got his story elsewhere, for a Frenchman, François de Belleforest, a courtier of Queen Marguerite of Navarre (that teller of tales) had compiled in 1582 a collection of *Histoires Tragiques* in which Bandello's Hero-Claudio story actually does appear. It is tempting to dwell upon Belleforest, who comes very notably into Shakespearean story, as the lost original *Hamlet* play (probably by Kyd) came from Saxo Grammaticus *via* the French of Belleforest. But we must confine ourselves to *Much Ado*. Belleforest adapted rather than translated the original story, or at least he "enriched" it, as he claims, and, where there are differences of detail, Shakespeare follows Bandello rather than Belleforest. We can assume then that Bandello himself, either directly, or through the medium of some vanished play, provided the Hero-Claudio story for *Much Ado about Nothing*. Observe certain points of the legend.

(6) *Bandello's Story*

We are in Sicily, the scene of that romantic adventure, the establishment of Norman sovereignty in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. After the direct line of Norman rulers had ended, the crown passed to the semi-Norman Hohenstaufen Emperors, and Frederick II (the "second Frederick" of *Sordello*) reigned in Sicily from 1197 to 1250. When Frederick died, his natural son, Manfred, ruled as Regent for Conrad, the next heir (who died in 1254), and then for Conradin, a minor. Pope Urban IV, pursuing the long conflict with the Emperors, excommunicated Manfred and offered the crown of Sicily to Charles of Anjou. At the tragic battle of Benevento (1266) Manfred, "last of the Normans," was defeated and slain, and two years later, after the battle of Tagliacozzo, Prince Conradin was beheaded at Naples in his seventeenth year by sentence of the victorious Charles. These events are alluded to by Dante in *Inferno XXVIII*, Manfred himself appearing in *Purgatorio III*. The Sicilians endured the hated rule of Charles and the Angevins until 1282, when an insult offered

to a young Sicilian bride by a French officer as the bells of Santo Spirito, just beyond the walls of Palermo, were ringing for vespers, provoked an outbreak that ended in the slaughter of four thousand Frenchmen. The massacre of the Sicilian Vespers marked the end of French rule. Charles attacked Messina, but was defeated, and King Peter of Aragon, son-in-law of Manfred, was crowned in the Cathedral of Palermo.

It is at this point that Bandello's story begins. After his coronation, King Peter comes to Messina where he sets up his court. Here one of his greatest and noblest knights, Don Timbreo di Cardona, falls passionately in love with Fenicia, the young and beautiful daughter of Lionato de' Lionati, an impoverished gentleman of ancient lineage; and the young lord, having tried in vain to make Fenicia his mistress, is at last moved to offer her marriage. Lionato instantly and joyfully agrees to the great alliance, and everybody is pleased except one, Don Girondo Olerio Valenziano, who was himself in love with Fenicia. Girondo suborns an unnamed person [Borachio] to tell Don Timbreo that Fenicia is unchaste, and that he may prove it for himself if he watches her window from a ruined place in the garden. When night comes, Don Timbreo duly sees someone bring a ladder to Fenicia's window, which is presently entered by a lackey in the gay dress of a gallant. Don Timbreo instantly believes the guilt of Fenicia, and sends next day a messenger to Lionato, declaring that, Fenicia being unchaste, he must seek a more complaisant son-in-law. Lionato firmly believes in his child's innocence, and declares that Don Timbreo, having grown cool, is taking this means of evading a marriage with a poor dowerless girl. Fenicia swoons and apparently dies; but, being washed for her burial, revives. Nevertheless, the report of her death is generally believed, and Lionato sends her away, and allows the funeral to proceed. The coffin is housed, amid general lamentation, in the vaults of the Lionati, with an inscription like that on Hero's tomb. Later, Girondo, overcome with remorse, confesses his crime before the tomb of Fenicia, and begs Timbreo to kill him in just punishment. Timbreo behaves magnanimously to

the repentant sinner, and they go together to Lionato and express their deep remorse, promising to make any amends Lionato should desire. Lionato thereupon asks Don Timbreo to take in marriage a wife selected by him, and, the promise being given, produces Fenicia a year after her tragic repudiation, changed and even more beautiful, but living and loving, and all ends happily.

(7) *Comparison with Much Ado*

Even this very rough and imperfect summary will help to elucidate some difficulties in *Much Ado*. Who, for instance, is the lofty Don Pedro, the Prince to whom everybody is so obsequious? The play gives no indication, but the story shows him to be the famous King Peter of Aragon. What is the war just over as the play begins? The fighting that established King Peter in the sovereignty of Sicily Why does there seem to be a sort of oddity in the marriage of Claudio and Hero?—surely the proudest of young nobles need not have felt hesitation in wedding the daughter of the governor, even though Don John suggests an inferiority of station. In the story, Lionato is not the governor of a city, but an impoverished nobleman. Why does Don John in causeless malignity plot disaster to an innocent girl? In the story, Don Girondo is the girl's hopeless lover. These further differences will be noted: in the story Don Timbreo, save for his one impassioned suspicion, is a gentleman; Claudio is as little of a gentleman as a nobleman can be, disputing with Count Bertram of Rousillon the bad eminence of being Shakespeare's completest cad. In the story, Fenicia has a sympathetic father and mother; in the play Hero has no mother, and her father is a credulous and harsh old fool. In the play, a public and entirely unsubstantiated charge of unchastity against the daughter of the Governor is made by a stranger, almost a foreigner, in a church crowded with Sicilian gallants—a vile and incredible insult, which could have been instantly answered, and would have been violently resented. In the story, the charge is not made publicly by Timbreo, but privately and courteously by a third person, and poor Lionato has no means of defending his dowerless girl, contemptuously

thrown over by a rich and apparently satiated nobleman. In the story there is no girl disguised to resemble Fenicia. In the play, Ariosto's Dalinda becomes Shakespeare's Margaret and gives us one of Shakespeare's weakest moments as a dramatist; for he makes Margaret a co-conspirator with a villain, a silent instrument in a deadly plot against her mistress, reduces her to little more than a name, and requires us to accept her as an innocent and pleasing character. Indeed, the whole Hero-Claudio story, from the gratuitous wooing by proxy to the incredible scene of repudiation, is the poorest part of the play. It compares very unfavourably with its Italian parallel in probability, in plot and in detail. Don Pedro behaves with entire unintelligence. Claudio, as we have said, is merely despicable; Leonato is a repellant and foolish father; Margaret, who holds the key of the mystery, says nothing about it in spite of all her chatter; and Hero herself is almost meanly acquiescent, lacking the air of spiritual exaltation that redeems the sacrifice of Helena to Bertram. In Bandello, the charge is unanswerable; in *Much Ado* it would not survive a moment's investigation. As will be shown in the Notes, Shakespeare handles the story very carelessly and seems to be interested in it merely as material for the dramatic and rhetorical church scene. All this points to haste or indifference, and I cannot agree with Dr Boas, who finds in the play "extraordinarily deft workmanship." The workmanship of the pattern is much below Bandello's; but the workmanship of the fabric is, of course, beyond any such comparison. Though nowhere rising to the exquisite poetic beauty of *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado* is rich in the texture that gives to Shakespeare's verse and prose its unmatchable quality.

(8) *Other Parallels*

Readers who desire to pursue the supposed parallels to *Much Ado* any further should consult the elaborate appendices of Furness, where they will find mentioned, in addition to those already named, a Dutch play by Jan Jansen Starter, a late Grecian romance *Chaereas and Callirrhoe*, by Chariton, and the Spanish novel *Tirante el Blanco*,

the last of which deserves our respect and even our love in another connection; for was it not one of the books in the sacrificed library of Don Quixote, that connoisseur of romances? On the fatal day when the curate and the barber were engaged in the work of destruction, the latter, not caring to tire himself with any more reading, told the housekeeper to collect all the big volumes and throw them into the yard.

It was not said to one dull or deaf, but to one who enjoyed burning them more than weaving the broadest and finest web that could be; and seizing about eight at a time she flung them out of the window.

In carrying so many together she let one fall at the feet of the barber, who took it up, curious to know whose it was, and found it said, "History of the Famous Knight, Tirante el Blanco."

"God bless me!" said the curate with a shout, "'Tirante el Blanco' here! Hand it over, gossip, for in it I reckon I have found a treasury of enjoyment and a mine of recreation. Here is Don Kyrieleison of Mantalvan, a valiant knight, and his brother Thomas of Mantalvan, and the knight Fonseca, with the battle of the bold Tirante fought with the mastiff, and the witticisms of the damsel Placerdemivida, and the loves and wiles of the widow Reposada, and the empress in love with the squire Hipolito—in truth, gossip, by right of its style it is the best book in the world. Here knights eat and sleep, and die in their beds, and make their wills before dying, and a great deal more of which there is nothing in all the other books."

Those who are tempted by this eulogy to essay the adventure of reading *Tirante el Blanco* should begin with "the loves and wiles of the widow Reposada," a story which offers some few incidents similar to those in *Much Ado*, but common to the whole general repertory of tales. Mr Fitzmaurice-Kelly warns us that the slight extravagance of praise is not to be taken seriously, and that Cervantes meant to condemn this book with most of its fellow sinners. On the other hand, Don Pascual de Gayangos inclines to the belief that Cervantes meant the praise seriously. Mr Fitzmaurice-Kelly further adds that Joanot Martorell, who is alleged to have translated it from English into Portuguese and thence into Valencian (in which language it was originally published in 1490), is undoubtedly the

author. Apparently no surviving English romance provides a parallel. But this is a digression for which we ask pardon on the plea that it is a duty as well as a delight to quote from *Don Quixote* whenever occasion serves.

(IX) SHAKESPEARE'S ADDITIONS TO THE STORY

(1) *New Characters*

If, as we have said, Bandello's Fenicia-Timbreo story is a more successful piece of tale-telling than Shakespeare's Hero-Claudio story, it is much inferior in scope, style and general human interest to *Much Ado* as a whole. Bandello gives us no Dogbery and Verges, no thrilling dramatic point like the sudden "Kill Claudio!" that makes an elaborate piece of melodrama come alive, and, above all, no Beatrice and Benedick. Beatrice, specially, is in the right line of Shakespeare's sparkling heroines. She is Rosaline and Rosalind and Portia and something of Kate the Shrew. And yet she, too, is a mystery. Who is she? What is she doing in this *ménage*? She is expressly described in the very first stage-direction as Leonato's "niece"; but how? "Who was her father, who was her mother?" The reader is at first tempted to think that Anthony, Leonato's brother, is her father; but that is not so. Anthony is never referred to as her father, and Leonato expressly calls himself her guardian. Anthony has a shadowy and musical son, seen but never heard, and he later assumes the fatherhood of the supposititious daughter whom Claudio is to marry, "were she an Ethiope," in expiation of his crime against Hero; but Claudio never imagined that he was to marry Beatrice. (It is worth remembering, at this point, that Bandello's Lionato has a second daughter, Belfiore, who plays an important part in the *dénouement*.) Beatrice is Shakespeare's most complete orphan, without father or mother, or any indicated parentage. Indeed, we may go further and say that, like another celebrated orphan, she is without beginning of days or end of life; for she is one of Shakespeare's most enduringly popular heroines, presenting the eternal type

of high-spirited man-scorner softened at last by a half-reluctant love.

(2) *Did Shakespeare travel abroad?*

Whether Shakespeare got any suggestions for Beatrice and Benedick from other writers cannot be proved. The question is, however, very interesting, and we will give it a moment's attention, because it leads to still another question: Did Shakespeare ever travel abroad with any company of actors? It is historical fact that between 1580 and 1630 companies of English actors visited Germany, Austria, France, Holland, Denmark and Italy, where they gave highly successful performances. It is a fact that some of Shakespeare's own plays were included in their repertory. It is a fact that in 1620 a volume entitled *Engelische Comedien und Tragedien* appeared in Germany containing versions of *Titus Andronicus* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; and that in 1630 came a second volume containing eight English plays, not one of which appears to be extant in English (see *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.* v, 283 *et seq.*). There are early German versions of the pre-Shakespearean *Hamlet*, of *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. In 1585 and 1586 members of Lord Leicester's company visited the Danish court at Elsinore and extended their tour to Germany. Among them were Will Kemp, creator of Dogbery, and other actors mentioned in the First Folio. Kemp even visited Italy. Did Shakespeare travel to Germany or visit Elsinore itself? Did he even reach Italy and there catch the sweet infection of love for the land in which he laid so many of his gracious scenes? Some find reasons to think he did, but their reasons are ingenious rather than convincing. The plays themselves do not show us a travelled man. Italy, for Shakespeare, is merely "far away and long ago." I think we can dismiss Shakespeare's "travels" as entirely fanciful.

The only reason for a mention of the matter here is that, contemporary with Shakespeare, there lived, mainly at Nuremberg, a certain Jacob Ayrer, who wrote between 1583–1603 numerous plays described by the author as being "in the new English manner." One of them re-

sembles *The Tempest*. Another, the title of which, as translated in Furness, runs thus, *A Mirror of Womanly Virtue and Honour. The Comedy of the Fair Phaenicia and Count Tymbri of Golison from Arragon*, etc., is the Hero-Claudio story retold, apparently not from Bandello, but from Belleforest—certain peculiarities of the latter being transferred to the play. It is quite certain that there is no direct contact between *Much Ado* and *The Beautiful Phaenicia*. What is possible, however, is that some unknown play, acted by the English comedians abroad, may have been the common basis of both. The essential dissimilarity can best be seen after reference to Cohn's volume containing passages from Ayrer's comedy. In this play there is a foolish man-servant, Jahn, who pursues a low-comedy love-affair with a reluctant waiting-woman, Anna-Maria, and certain German critics (including Hermann Grimm) have suggested that Shakespeare found here the germ of his Beatrice and Benedick. Hermann Grimm has discovered still another original for Benedick. The Duke Heinrich Julius of Brunswick, born in the year of Shakespeare's birth, was a noble whose interest in the stage led him to keep a company of actors and to write plays himself. One of these, *Vincentius Ladislaus*, printed in 1599 (observe the date), presents the ludicrous adventures of the titular character, who, in his blend of foolish vanity, grotesque mendacity and general idiocy, seems to be a blend of Parolles, Andrew Aguecheek, Ralph Roister Doister and Baron Munchausen. It is difficult to see how any critic can find in Vincentius the least trace of an original for Benedick. Henry Julius of Brunswick, like Ayrer, interests the student of Shakespeare almost solely because he elucidates, ever so little, the literary relations between England and the Continent in the sixteenth century. Students will find a mine of interesting matter in Albert Cohn's *Shakespeare in Germany in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: an Account of English Actors in Germany and the Netherlands and of the Plays performed by them during the same Period* (1865). Lengthy passages of Ayrer's play are translated in this volume and in Furness. It should be added that though the collection of facts in Cohn's volume

is highly interesting, the inferences are sometimes rash and should be accepted with caution.

(3) *Beatrice and Benedick*

Whatever originals there may or may not be, it is clear that the Beatrice and Benedick we know are Shakespeare's own invention; and it is they, not Hero and Claudio, who make the play popular. We have said that Beatrice is in the line of Shakespeare's sparkling heroines. Benedick, too, is not without his ancestors. He is Biron grown into an experienced man of the world; he is Mercutio extended and matched with an opposite as keen in fence as he; he is Gratiano refined and made fit for decent society. Beatrice and Benedick even from the first were the popular characters. Leonard Digges, in the lines prefixed to the *Poems* of 1640, writes:

> ...let but *Beatrice*
> And *Benedicke* be seene, loe in a trice
> The Cockpit, Galleries, Boxes all are full.

They have often been imitated, directly or indirectly. Playgoers and novel-readers will recall many modern comedies and stories in which the compleat bachelor and the high-spirited independent girl are compelled, not merely to abdicate their independence, but to make a mutual surrender. Perhaps the most striking modern parallel to this part of *Much Ado* is Bernard Shaw's *You Never Can Tell*, where Valentine, "the duellist of sex," and Gloria Clandon, "the new woman," capitulate almost abjectly. The soothing words of the delightful Waiter might have been uttered to Benedick, whose dread of the future is disguised under very thin bravado:

Crampton. Then, Mr Bohun, you don't think the match an unwise one?

Bohun. Yes I do; all matches are unwise. It's unwise to be born; it's unwise to be married; it's unwise to live; and it's wise to die.

Waiter. Then, if I may respectfully put a word in, sir, so much the worse for wisdom! [To Valentine, benignly] Cheer up sir, cheer up: every man is frightened of marriage when it comes to the point; but it very often turns out very comfortable, very enjoyable and happy indeed, sir—from time to time. *I* never

was master in my own house, sir: my wife was like your young lady: she was of a commanding and masterful disposition. But if I had my life to live twice over, I'd do it again, I'd do it again, I assure you. You never can tell, sir: you never can tell.

Mr Shaw gives us another married Benedick in *Man and Superman*; but here Beatrice is wanting, for Ann is the born wife, not the female "duellist of sex." John Tanner, meant to be Don Juan, is much closer to Benedick, and some of his utterances (translated into Elizabethan) would fit the mouth of the other reluctant husband. This, for example:

Ann. Well, if you don't want to be married, you needn't be.

Tanner. Does any man want to be hanged? Yet men let themselves be hanged without a struggle for life, though they could at least give the chaplain a black eye. We do the world's will, not our own. I have a frightful feeling that I shall let myself be married because it is the world's will that you should have a husband.

Ann. I daresay I shall, some day.

Tanner. But why *me—me* of all men? Marriage is to me apostasy, profanation of the sanctuary of my soul, violation of my manhood, sale of my birthright, shameful surrender, ignominious capitulation, acceptance of defeat. I shall decay like a thing that has served its purpose and is done with; I shall change from a man with a future to a man with a past; I shall see in the greasy eyes of all the other husbands their relief at the arrival of a new prisoner to share their ignominy. The young men will scorn me as one who has sold out: to the women, I who have always been an enigma and a possibility, shall be merely somebody else's property—and damaged goods at that: a secondhand man at best.

And later:

Tanner. I solemnly say that I am not a happy man. Ann looks happy; but she is only triumphant, successful, victorious. That is not happiness, but the price for which the strong sell their happiness. What we have both done this afternoon is to renounce happiness, renounce freedom, renounce tranquillity, above all, renounce the romantic possibilities of an unknown future, for the cares of a household and a family. I beg that no man may seize the occasion to get half-drunk and utter imbecile speeches and coarse pleasantries at my expense.

The last admonition might very profitably have been addressed to Claudio and his princely friend, for their taste in pleasantry can scarcely be called fine.

One of the most remarkable and most obscure passages in the present play refers to the story of Beatrice and Benedick. In II. I. 249, Pedro says to Beatrice, "Come Lady, come, you have lost the heart of signior Benedicke"; to which Beatrice replies:

> Indeed my Lord, he lent it me awhile, and I gave him use for it, a double heart for his single one, mary once before he wonne it of me, with false dice, therefore your grace may well say I have lost it.

What does this mean? Is it serious? If so, the serious fit lasts but a moment, for Beatrice returns instantly to her rather broad jesting. Perhaps Beatrice is merely referring to the masquerade, during which there has been some very, almost dangerously, plain speaking. We may paraphrase her words thus:

> Yes, I have lost his heart indeed, for, taking advantage of his disguise, he opened his heart very freely, calling me disdainful, cheap-witted, and so forth; but I gave him his own back with interest, a double heart full of plain speaking for his single one, for he got twice as much as he gave. Once before he did the same sort of thing, in the same false way. You may well say I have lost his heart, for he is not likely to play this game again.

That is the most obvious explanation of this odd speech, and perhaps the best one, for it is quite in Beatrice's vein and it keeps us within the bounds of the play as we have it. For any other explanation we must go outside the play and assume (1) that Shakespeare originally wrote some earlier scenes dealing with the story of Beatrice and Benedick, and then excised them—for note that the two meet in Act I as old friends (or enemies); or (2) that Shakespeare used some older play containing somewhat similar characters, and did not remove all the allusions; or (3) that Shakespeare deliberately makes reference to an untold story, as an artistic means of securing the three-dimensioned reality that is perhaps his greatest dramatic quality. Shakespeare's characters are not creatures of a minute: they bring with them their past and their future. If the speech of Beatrice at this moment is serious it is almost tragic. We must assume that Beatrice and Benedick have

a past that has touched them deeply and left a defensive bitterness. "Use," as we have indicated, is "interest." What, then, was the "double heart" she gave him for his "single one"? Did Benedick woo her once in earlier days, so capturing her affections that she gave him her heart double-charged with love, which he lightly rejected and so, with "false dice," got back what he gave? The story of Pegeen and Christy Mahon in *The Playboy of the Western World* perhaps illustrates the situation a little. The wild heart of Pegeen is captured at once by the apparent courage and glowing speech of Christy, who, proving afterwards (as she thinks) to be no more than a liar and facile romancer, is rent by her fury; but when he goes he takes her heart with him, and she cries, as perhaps Beatrice does in this very speech, "My grief! I have lost him!"

But this is reading too much into a sentence, and the only justification for any such interpretation is the clear fact that Beatrice and Benedick meet, at the very opening of the play, as persons on special terms of defensive intimacy. "There is a kind of merry war," says Leonato, "betwixt Signior Benedick and her: they never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them." Much can be read into such a statement.

Indeed, it is not a paradox to say that the comedy of Beatrice and Benedick is the only serious part of *Much Ado*. The Hero-Claudio story is melodrama *plus* rhetoric. It is of the stage, stagey, and we cannot take it seriously. But the Beatrice-Benedick story rings true. It is the best of human comedy, because it is near to tragedy. Beatrice and Benedick are two fine spirits, mutually and instantly attracted, conscious of each other's power and therefore instinctively hostile through fear; but what they really fear is not each other, but themselves—not conquest, but surrender. If Beatrice were a modern stage character, she would enlarge at length on the call of self, the independence of women, the duty of living one's own life, and so forth. As a Shakespearean character, she says none of these things, but she feels them, and they are the unspoken motive of her specific hostility to Benedick (for, observe,

she is kind to everybody else), because she fears him as the one man who has weakened her sense of self-sufficiency. Much of this is true also of Benedick, who assumes the pose of anti-feminist, not indeed, because he hates all women, but because he is afraid of loving this one woman. It is a terrible moment when a man encounters the woman before whom his pride becomes as wax in the flame.

So Beatrice and Benedick assume an attitude of defensive hostility, pretending, in lawful strategy, that they are strong just where they know they are weak. Of course, they overdo it, as such people will. Those who complain that their hostility is crude or over-drawn have missed the point, which is, that an assumed character is naturally unnatural. A rich man can afford to neglect appearances; a man pretending to be rich cannot. If Beatrice and Benedick really disliked each other they would tacitly avoid each other; but instead they seek each other out to show each other the extraordinary amount of their indifference. Real indifference is not so sedulous; real indifference is really indifferent. At the opening of the play the first person Beatrice mentions is Benedick and the one person whom Benedick ostentatiously affects to ignore is Beatrice.

We need not, therefore, attach too much importance to the excellent comedy device by which these duellists of sex are taken suddenly unawares and compelled for a moment to face the facts. The plot of Pedro and Claudio does not make Benedick fall in love with Beatrice; the plot of Hero and Ursula does not make Beatrice fall in love with Benedick; the effect of the conspiracy is simply to make them recognise that they have been in love with each other all the time. What really unites them is not the trick in the garden, but the tragedy in the church. At the sight of Hero's agony, pity and indignation fill the heart of Beatrice, and she slips unconsciously back into mere womanhood. She has need, now, of a man's arm. The barriers of pose and pretence are down between the two and they stand, deeply moved, over-mastered, with their love confessed though still unspoken. The breaking of such a silence is a crucial moment for the poet. "If he should falter now," we murmur. But Shakespeare does not falter.

A lesser artist would have begun with a declaration of love, or something equally false in feeling; but Benedick's first words are among Shakespeare's most exquisite touches of art, and the rest of the scene is on the level of the opening. It is another touch of supreme art that the first meeting of Beatrice and Benedick on the new footing—the meeting anticipated with such huge delight by Pedro and Claudio—should be in circumstances like these, when the first pledge of love is to be the life of the man who plotted the encounter as a jest. The scene ought to be played strongly, intensely, and not in the "touch and go" spirit of light comedy; for the purpose of Beatrice is as strong and keen as the sword for which she is to ask. Turn to the page itself and observe the steps by which the climax is reached—first the wish of Beatrice for a man, a friend, to help her, then the general offer of Benedick, who is told that the work is not his, because the quarrel is not his, for he is unconnected with Hero and is bound by old ties to Pedro and Claudio: the quarrel cannot be his, unless new ties bind him to Beatrice. Prophetically he swears love by his sword, and Beatrice then approaches her great demand with utterances playful, yet full of purpose, for even through her tenderness shines the steel of the desiderated sword. Not till his love is sworn and his arm dedicated to her service, does Beatrice, in terrible brevity, demand from him the life of his friend. His reply is as great dramatically as the demand, and the surrender as great as both. Indeed, it seems to me, that these two pages of *Much Ado* touch a height of tense, true drama that very few English comedies have ever surpassed.

(4) *Dogbery and Verges*

The third strand in the story of *Much Ado* has also contributed much to the popularity of the play. Without Dogbery and his men the interest would be more than halved—another proof that in a work of art the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Actually the constables contribute little to the story, though something to the plot. Their happy blundering helps first to tangle and then to unravel the mystery, but they are entirely remote from the

tragedy of Hero and the comedy of Beatrice. Their special function is not, indeed, to provide what is called "comic relief," and not, like the grave-makers in *Hamlet* or the gardener in *Richard II*, to heighten, as by dim suggestion from afar, a sense of impending doom, and thrill the hearer with a feeling of something beyond the audible words. They are there to keep a serious story from straying outside the limits of comedy—just as in *Don Giovanni* the monumentally comic Leporello and an apparently superfluous and lively epilogue keep that wonderful work to its proper key of comedy. For an example of Shakespearean "comic relief" we can turn to the two Gobbos in *The Merchant of Venice*, where we find matter entirely extraneous both to plot and to story, and, we must confess, neither very comic nor much of a relief. Dogbery and Verges are on the plane of Bottom and Quince, and are conceived with a largeness of heart and sympathy that ought to shame the suburban minds who claim Shakespeare as the spokesman of snobbery. Shakespeare, like Dickens and Cervantes, laughs with his great comic creations, not at them. Neither Shakespeare nor Scott believed it necessary to make men contemptible because they were poor. The great humorists are something more than sycophants. Dogbery's fatuity is stupendous; but we enjoy him, because Shakespeare enjoyed him. Humour is, in a way, the greatest triumph of creative literature, for it must come pure from a generous heart. No one by taking thought can create humorous characters.

> What is wanted (says Bagehot) is to appreciate mere clay, which mere mind never will....However strong in any poet may be the higher qualities of abstract thought or conceiving fancy, unless he can actually sympathise with those around him, he can never describe those around him. Any attempt to produce a likeness of what is not really *liked* by the person who is describing it, will end in the creation of what may be correct, but is not living—of what may be artistic, but is likewise artificial.

That is why humorists are so few. Bottom and Quince are examples of "mere clay" struggling with an unwonted artistic and intellectual task; Dogbery and Verges are

"mere clay" struggling with the intricacies of the law. Now the law is rich in phrases, and the heavy, unquickened mind adheres to the ritual of phrases. Listen to-day to such talk as politeness permits you to overhear on trams and trains, and you will find, among the class from whom Shakespeare drew his humorous characters, the same attachment to time-honoured formulas, just as in the class above that you find a similar attachment to the *clichés* of journalism and politics. The first are generally making an effort at thought, the second an effort to avoid thought. Certainly no one can accuse Dogbery and Verges of not taking thought. They overflow with laborious effort. But then, consider their position! They are "the Prince's officers," or in English, parish officers. The direction for their first entry reads, *Enter Dogbery and his compartner with the Watch*; but their next entry is headed, *Enter Leonato, and the Constable, and the Headborough*, and nearly all through that scene the official titles preface their speeches. Later, as we have seen, the names of the comedians Will Kemp and Cowley are affixed to the speeches of Dogbery and Verges, so that we know who created these parts. Still a third officer appears in that scene, the "Towne Clearke" in an official "gowne," but though gowned and clerked in the heading, he is called "Sexton" in the text—doubtless being, like borough officials in times much later, a pluralist. Dogbery's own office was, in fact, one of great importance, even though Dogbery (like his betters) was not conspicuously fit to hold it.

In Saxon and early Norman times, public peace was secured by a sort of mutual insurance—ten homesteads joined together and undertook, so to speak, to keep each other in order. In a sense, they were all policemen, but elected one of themselves to be representative of all and responsible for the bringing of wrongdoers to justice. This chosen person was the Headborough, Tythingman, Borsholder or Chief Frankpledge. As time went on, the nature of the Headborough's duties changed, but the name was kept. Specific measures for the public safety were embodied in the Statute of Winchester (1285), which instituted

a regular system of watch and ward. In Edward III's time we find a further development, the existence of the Petty Constable acting under the direction of the Justice of the Peace, who was himself originally more of a policeman than a judge.

The qualifications that a constable ought to possess are thus tabulated by Coke:

(1) Honesty: to execute his office truly without malice, affection, or partiality.

(2) Knowledge: to understand his duty, what he ought to do.

(3) Ability: as well in estate as in body, that so he may attend and execute his office diligently, and not neglect the same through want or impotency. (Melville Lee, *A History of Police in England*, 1901.)

We seem to be listening to Dogbery's charge to the watch.

The constable's duties with regard to watch and ward were, to keep a roster of the watchmen, to see that they were vigilant and alert during the hours of watching, to receive into custody any guilty or reasonably suspected person handed over to him by the watch, and to keep such person in safety, until he should give bail or be brought before a Justice of the Peace. (Lee, *op. cit.*)

Observe how, in thirteenth century Messina, Leonato suddenly becomes an English Justice of the Peace, receiving the sworn information of the Petty Constable.

Dogbery was only a Petty Constable, but he had the spirit of High Constable. Colquhoun's *Treatise on the Functions and Duties of the Constable* (1803) can scarcely be cited as an authority for 1600, but his description of the High Constable's duties will sound familiar to readers of *Much Ado*.

The High Constable has the superintendence and direction of the petty constables, headboroughs, and other peace officers in his hundred or division. It is his duty to take cognisance of, and to present all offences within his hundred or division which lead to the corruption of morals, breaches of the Lord's Day, Drunkenness Cursing or Swearing....To do all in his power to arrest offenders and so to dispose of his constables as to suppress the disorders in question.

The High Constable, it may be observed, was an officer of the Hundred or Wapentake, and appointed the Headborough, Tythingman or Borsholder for each Borough or District within the Hundred. Of the Headborough or Tythingman thus writes Ashdowne in *The Churchwardens' and Overseers' Guide*:

There is frequently a Tythingman in the same town with a constable, who is, as it were, a deputy to exercise the office in the constable's absence; but there are some things which the constable has power to do that tythingmen cannot interfere with.

No wonder poor Verges is patronised by the "right maister Constable!" Dalton's *Countrey Justice* (1620), quoted by Halliwell (in Furness), is also delightfully apt:

This watch is to be kept yearly from the feast of the Ascention until Michaelmas, in every towne, and shall continue all the night, *sc.* from the sunne setting to the sunne rising. All such strangers, or persons suspected, as shall in the night time passe by the watchmen (appointed thereto by the towne constable, or other officer), may be examined by the said watchmen, whence they come, and what they be, and of their businesse, etc. And if they find case of suspition, they shall stay them; and if such persons will not obey the arrest of the watchmen, the said watchmen shall levie hue and crie, that the offendors may be taken: or else they may justify to beate them (for that they resist the peace and Justice of the Realme), and may also set them in the stockes (for the same) untill the morning; and then, if no suspition be found, the said persons shall be let go and quit: But if they find cause of suspition, they shall forthwith deliver the said persons to the sherife, who shall keepe them in prison untill they bee duely delivered; or else the watchmen may deliver such person to the constable, and so to convey them to the Justice of peace, by him to be examined, and to be bound over, or committed, untill the offendours be acquitted in due manner.

(5) *Dogbery in Real Life*

Furness calls attention to a remarkable anticipation of Dogbery's doings in real and very high life:

There is an original letter, discovered by Mr Lemon in the State Paper Office, entirely in the handwriting of Lord Burghley, dated from Theobalds on the 10th of August, 1586, only two months and a day before the meeting of the Commissioners

at Fotheringay for the trial of Mary Queen of Scots. The letter, which is addressed to Secretary Walsingham, relates to some circumstances preparatory to that event, when a watch was set and the "ways laid," according to the ordinary expression of that day, for the capture of conspirators. It gives us a curious account of the proceedings of the Dogberys of that day for the arrest of suspected persons, and shows how much to the life our great dramatist drew the characters he introduced. Lord Burghley observed at Enfield such inefficient and Dogbery-like arrangements for the seizure of the parties implicated, that, on his arrival at home, he dispatched the letter in question to Sir Francis Walsingham. The extreme speed with which he was anxious that his communication to the Secretary should be conveyed may be judged from the superscription, in the following singular form:

To the R. Honorable my verie loving frend Sir Francis Walsingham, Knight,
Hir Ma^{ts} Principall Secretary, at London. hast
hast } Post
hast
W. Burghley. hast

'In order to render its contents perfectly intelligible, we must premise, that by August 10th, 1586, the ministers of Elizabeth were in full possession of the details of a plot by Antony Babington, in concert with the Queen of Scots, to murder the Queen of England; and they had just arrived at that point, when the arrest or escape of any of the conspirators would have been of the utmost importance. Ballard, one of the principal conspirators, had been taken up on August 4th, which instantly alarmed the rest, who therefore fled in all directions. These were the parties who, according to Lord Burghley, were "missing," and to arrest whom the Dogberys of Enfield were upon the watch, all the means of identification they apparently possessed being that one of the accused had a "hooked nose." It is worthy of note also that Babington and some of his co-conspirators were arrested on the very day that Lord Burghley's letter bears date; and hence we may infer, perhaps, that the description, however defective, was sufficient.

Sir—As I cam from London homward, in my coche, I sawe at euery townes end the nombre of x. or xij. standyng, with long staues, and vntill I cam to Enfield I thought no other of

them, but that they had stayd for auoyding of the rayne, or to drynk at some alehouses, for so they did stand vnder pentyces [pent-houses] at alehouses. But at Enfield fynding a dosen in a plump [group], whan ther was no rayne, I bethought myself that they war apoynted as watchmen, for the apprehendyng of such as ar missyng [*i.e.* certain escaped traitors]; and thereuppon I called some of them to me apart, and asked them wherfor they stood ther? and on of them answered,—To tak 3 yong men. And demandyng how they shuld know the persons, on answered with these words:—Mary, my Lord, by intelligence of ther fauor. What meane you by that? quoth I. Marry, sayd they, on of the partyes hath a hooked nose.—And haue you, quoth I, no other mark?—No, sayth they. And then I asked who apoynted them; and they answered on Bankes, a Head Constable, whom I willed to be sent to me.—Suerly, sir, who so euer had the chardg from yow hath vsed the matter negligently, for these watchmen stand so oppenly in plumps, as no suspected person will come neare them; and if they be no better instructed but to fynd 3 persons by on of them hauyng a hooked nose, they may miss therof. And thus I thought good to aduertise yow, that the Justyces that had the chardg, as I thynk, may vse the matter more circumspectly.'

(X) A MISSING CHARACTER

There is one other character of the play deserving our special notice, because, though named, and apparently necessary, she never appears. Surely what Hero needs most in her misery, when her own father furiously joins in the hunt against her, is a mother. Now Bandello gives Fenicia an excellent mother as well as an excellent father; there is a mother (Veracundia) in Ayrer's play; and Shakespeare (as I think) originally gave Hero a mother. The very first stage-direction of the play reads: *Enter Leonato Governour of Messina, Innogen his wife, Hero his daughter and Beatrice his Neece, with a messenger.* Later (Act II) we get this: *Enter Leonato, his brother, his wife, Hero his daughter, and Beatrice his neece and a kinsman.* But when we come to the church scene (Act IV) where all the principals are assembled, there is no mention of Leonato's wife, and nowhere in the play does she speak a word or give the least indication of presence. The play exhibits Hero as entirely motherless. Who, then, is the mysterious Innogen?

The usual explanation is that she is a character in the old play on which Shakespeare worked, and that her name was retained by an accident of copying. Well, there may have been an "old play" and Hero may have had a mother in it; but my own view is that Innogen's appearance represents Shakespeare's first thought, and her disappearance his second thought. In Bandello, remember, the accusation is not made in public, and not made by Don Timbreo. That credulous but courteous young gentleman sends a messenger to deliver his refusal of marriage privately to Lionato and his wife. There is no church scene and no public repudiation. I believe that, in the first part of the story, Shakespeare wrote a part for Hero's mother; but by the time he came to the church scene with its gross and abominable interruption, he recognised, as every sensible reader must recognise, that Hero's mother would probably be able to prove an alibi for the poor girl on the night before her marriage; or if not, that her outraged instinct and commonsense would have prompted questions enough to shatter the accusation to atoms. The church scene, remember, is Shakespeare's own addition to the story. It has no parallel in the other versions. In writing it, therefore, Shakespeare suddenly found himself in this dilemma; either he must equip Hero with a second fatuously stupid parent, thus making an incredible scene still more incredible, or else he must give the girl a sensible mother who would spoil the scene entirely. It is hard enough to believe in the silence of Beatrice; to believe in the silence of Innogen as well would be impossible. Shakespeare solved the difficulty therefore by turning back and cutting her out of the play. The two references to her are thus not accidents of copying but accidents of retention.

Consider. Innogen is actually the name given by Holinshed to the wife of Brute[1], the mythical Trojan founder of Britain; and it is very near to that with which

[1] Al things being thus brought to passe according to Brutes desire, wind also and wether serving the purpose, he with his wife Innogen and his people imbarked, and hoisting up sailes departed from the coasts of Grecia (Bk II, chap. ii).

Shakespeare was to baptise one of his loveliest creations, some years later, in a play drawn from Holinshed's story of Britain—where the husband, too, is Leonatus. *Cymbeline*, as we have it, is a thing of shreds and patches; and perhaps Shakespeare was already considering the story. He had been at Holinshed just before *Much Ado* for *Henry IV* and *Henry V*; and with the name Innogen in his mind used it for the wife of Leonato. Later, when Leonatus was to be wived, he made a slight and exquisite change in the name he had first borrowed and rejected, and Innogen became Imogen. This, of course, is nothing but conjecture; but it is at least as plausible as the suggestion that "Innogen his wife" is a mere ghost from an old play hovering on the threshold of the new. Possibly, however, as we shall proceed to suggest, Innogen may have belonged to a different part of the story.

(XI) A REVISED VERSION

(1) *Hero and Claudio*

So far I have taken the play as we find it, and called attention to one or two possible "second thoughts." There are, however, indications that the existing play is altogether a second thought, the result of revision, readjustment or re-composition. Turn for example to the first scene. Here we find Beatrice and Benedick, not merely known to each other, but on terms of easy intimacy. They have plainly met, not once, but many times. Claudio, however, appears to be a complete stranger to all. Read carefully Leonato's speech beginning, "A victory is twice itself," and continue for a score of lines to the point where Beatrice interrupts with her question about "Signior Mountanto":

Leona. A victory is twice it selfe, when the atchiever brings home ful numbers: I find here, that don Peter hath bestowed much honour on a young Florentine called Claudio.

Mess. Much deserv'd on his part, and equally remembred by don Pedro, he hath borne himselfe beyond the promise of his age, doing in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion, he hath indeed better bettred expectation than you must expect of me to tell you how.

Leo. He hath an unckle here in Messina will be very much glad of it.

Mess. I have already delivered him letters, and there appeares much joy in him, even so much that joy could not shew it selfe modest enough, without a badge of bitternesse.

Leo. Did he breake out into teares?

Mess. In great measure.

Leo. A kind overflow of kindenesse, there are no faces truer than those that are so washt, how much better is it to weepe at joy, than to joy at weeping?

Note further the question of Beatrice to the Messenger:

Beat. Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworne brother.

Mess. Ist possible?

Beat. Very easily possible....But I pray you, who is his companion? is there no young squarer now that will make a voyage with him to the divell?

Mess. He is most in the companie of the right noble Claudio.

Beat. ...God help the noble Claudio....

Is it not clear that Leonato and Beatrice are asking questions about a person unknown to them? The sole information Leonato appears to possess about Claudio is that he has an uncle in Messina. This tearful gentleman is referred to at some little length and then vanishes for ever from the story. When Claudio appears, not a single word, not the faintest sign of recognition, is exchanged between him and Leonato, or between him and Hero; and as soon as he is alone with Benedick he exclaims, "Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato?" as if he had seen her for the first time. We cannot, of course, draw a decisive conclusion from the mere form of his exclamation, but we are entitled to say that it does not sound in the least like a reference to someone already known to the speaker. Don Pedro enters, and Hero is further discussed. Pedro remarks that she is very worthy of love, and Claudio replies, "You speak this to fetch me in, my Lord"—that is, "to play a trick on me." When Benedick retires, Claudio turns to Don Pedro, and (on a new page of the Quarto and in the first blank verse of the play) confesses his love for Hero, asking (as it seems) rather particularly whether Leonato has a son. Then quite suddenly, we learn that

Claudio already knows Hero, that he had fallen in love with her during an earlier stay before the war, but made love take a second place to his duty as a soldier; and that, having now returned, he is more in love than ever. Thus, at the very opening of the play, we find a perplexing inconsistency—Beatrice and Benedick already intimate, Claudio a stranger, and then Claudio not a stranger. We feel that something here is left untold—or left out.

(2) *The Proxy Wooing*

At this point begins the first hint of a plot, but not the plot that we associate with *Much Ado.* It is the story of a Wooing by Proxy—a familiar source of complication in comedy. In Ayrer's play, Don Gerando acts as a sort of proxy, for he tells Anna Maria, the serving-maid, what love she has inspired; but when she learns that it is only the love of Jahn the lackey, she refuses to hear more. Humorous complications are made to arise from this situation. In *Much Ado*, Don Pedro, for no assigned or assignable reason, promises to woo Hero for Claudio. Claudio wishes this, though he does not ask it directly. "Wast not to this end," asks Pedro, "that thou beganst to twist so fine a story?" And Claudio gratefully accepts. Yet Claudio is not, like Christian de Neuville in *Cyrano de Bergerac*, a handsome dolt, nor is Hero, like Roxane, a fantastical lady requiring to be wooed in good set terms. And Don Pedro, we will add, is not in the least like Cyrano. As the play stands, this device of a Proxy Wooing is entirely gratuitous. Claudio can speak for himself volubly enough when occasion requires. However, for some reason, or no reason, Don Pedro undertakes to disguise himself as Claudio at a masked ball, woo and win Hero, inform her father, and then hand her over to the real Claudio. Claudio is told in most precise detail what the plan is, and approves almost effusively.

The usual complications now begin. In I. 2, Leonato is informed by his brother that "a good, sharp fellow" has told him that he overheard Don Pedro confessing to Claudio that he (Pedro) was in love with Hero and

proposed to declare his passion that night at the ball. We are not told who the good sharp fellow is or how he came to hear the conversation. To Leonato, the prospect of so great an alliance seems a dream; but he appears to attach no importance to the matter, and does not think it worth while to tell Hero about it himself: he leaves the task to his brother. The "good, sharp fellow," who is to be sent for and questioned, does not appear and is never mentioned again.

This is the first complication of the Proxy Wooing plot. Observe that this short scene is entirely unnecessary to the play *as we now have it*. Not a thing is said or done that contributes a single touch to the story of *Much Ado about Nothing*. It would be an important scene, however, in the story of a Proxy Wooing, for it contributes the first serious misunderstanding.

Act I. Sc. 3 introduces us to the three villains, and we discover that the motive spirit in the Bastard appears to be hatred of his more fortunate brother. We are confronted with the faint prototypes of Edgar and Edmund in *Lear*. Borachio, Don John's "jackal," who, for some reason unexplained and inexplicable, is "entertained for a perfumer" to smoke "a musty room," now arrives to tell his master that Don Pedro proposes to woo Hero *for himself* (there is no mention of the proposed disguise) and then to hand her over to Claudio. Why a servant or follower of Don John's, coming (as we suppose) with his master, was so far unrecognised that he was actually set to fumigate a room, we cannot imagine. If for a year he has been intimate with Margaret, Hero's waiting-woman, how is it that he is "entertained for a perfumer"? How long did he spend over the fumigation—i.e. what time elapses at this point? Where were Pedro and Claudio when he whipped behind the arras and listened? Did he hear the garden conversation from a window, or did Pedro and Claudio have their conversation all over again in this room? If so, why? And when did it happen? These are not idle questions. They should be answerable if the story is to work out smoothly. But they cannot be answered, because the story is not consistent. Note that Borachio's version

of the wooing differs both from the truth and from the tale told to Leonato by Anthony. It is the second complication of the Proxy Wooing story.

Don John now stirs out of his saturnine lethargy, for he scents occupation. He sees a chance of injuring, not only his brother, but Claudio, who, in some way not explained, had "got the glory" of Don John's "overthrow." So far, it will be observed, there is not a word about Hero. No one seems to suppose that she may have any interest in the question of her future. We are bound to say that she gives no hint of supposing so herself. We do not know whether she reciprocates Claudio's early love, or if she is even aware of it. We do not know anything whatever about her feelings towards either Claudio or Don Pedro. During much of the play she is a complete cipher. In the whole first Act, she speaks exactly one unimportant line of seven words. Indeed, until they actually stand together at the altar, Hero and Claudio have never conversed with each other alone. Claudio makes a formal and perfunctory speech of just nineteen words to Hero at the betrothal. Hero says nothing whatsoever to Claudio. Nay, even more; at the second marriage, after Hero has been disclosed to the astonished Claudio, not a single word passes between them. Not a syllable of contrition or shame escapes the lips of the man who has so vilely wronged the girl at his side. And she is equally silent. It is impossible to avoid a suspicion that something must have happened to the part of Hero. Surely she was not originally meant to be so speechless. She has scarcely a dozen lines in the whole play of which she is a central figure.

So we reach the second Act. In the first scene we gather, from a remark by Leonato's brother, that Hero has been told to expect a proposal from the prince, and knows, by her father's ruling, what answer she is to give. We do not know anything at all about the ruling or the answer. We are told nothing.

It is important, in view of what follows, to remember that Claudio knows the real truth about the Proxy Wooing —that he has been told exactly what is to happen, and that he agrees to it all.

The next reference to the plot comes at II. I. 138, where, after the love-making at the ball (Claudio himself, as far as we can tell, having neither danced nor spoken), the following conversation ensues:

John. Sure my brother is amorous on Hero, and hath withdrawne her father to breake with him about it: the Ladies follow her, and but one visor remaines.

Borach. And that is Claudio, I knowe him by his bearing.

John. Are not you Signior Benedicke?

Clau. You know me well, I am he.

John. Signior, you are very neere my brother in his love, he is enamoured on Hero, I pray you disswade him from her, she is no equall for his birth, you may doe the parte of an honest man in it.

Clau. How know you he loves her?

John. I heard him sweare his affection.

Bor. So did I too, and he swore he would marry her tonight.

John. Come let us to the banquet, (*exeunt: Manet* Clau.).

Clau. Thus answer I in name of Benedicke,
But heare these ill newes with the eares of Claudio:
Tis certaine so, the Prince wooes for himselfe, etc.

There are several difficulties here. If Pedro is recognised as Pedro, what has become of his proposed disguise as Claudio? If John's first speech is addressed to Borachio, as Borachio's reply seems to indicate, he has already forgotten what he was clearly told, namely, that Pedro was to woo Hero *for himself, and then hand her over to Claudio*. The suggestion has been made, however, that Don John (recognising Claudio) utters his first speech loudly enough to reach a listener's ears, Borachio's reply being whispered. The objection is first (generally) that shouts answered by whispers do not make a convincing deception, and next (particularly) that if Don John recognises Claudio he does not need Borachio to identify that gentleman for him.

What follows, however, is clear. Pretending to recognise Claudio as Benedick, Don John tells him (1) that Don Pedro is enamoured of Hero and has sworn to marry her, and (2) that Hero is no match for Don Pedro on account of her inferior station. Both statements are deliberately false and meant to give pain. Now Claudio knows all about

(1) because it has been carefully arranged between Pedro and himself; and he knows that (2) is ridiculous, first, because Pedro was likely to know at least as much as the dubious John about the station of the lady he was wooing, and next because the daughter of the Governor was certainly not too lowly to be married to Pedro, who later declares himself willing to marry the fatherless Beatrice. Hero was not Fenicia, poor and portionless. The statement is, and is meant to be, a piece of gratuitous and insulting disparagement; but Claudio, who has a complete answer to both assertions, ignores statement (2) and gives full credence to statement (1), although (we repeat) he knows the whole secret. He proceeds in a familiar passage to deplore the faithlessness of friends and the perils of wooing by proxy. When Benedick appears—he, too, having taken the prince's wooing quite seriously—Claudio is so overwrought that he breaks off the conversation and departs in anger.

Here again we feel that something is left untold—or left out. Act I. Sc. 2 has no successor: we are not shown the effect of the false news about the Prince's wooing upon the household of Leonato. "Innogen his wife" probably belongs to this story, and it seems inconceivable that Hero should be entirely left out of it. Something, we feel, should intervene between I. 2, and this point—some scene in which the villains play their promised part, and in which the report about Pedro is magnified into a certainty that possesses everyone, deceiving even John, who knows part of the truth, and Claudio who knows all of it. Pedro's disguise as Claudio is never mentioned again. We do not see him wooing Hero as we see Cyrano wooing Roxane, though we gather from John's remark that the wooing was as passionate and amorous as Pedro had promised. All we get is a hearsay wooing, a wooing that is merely reported, reported wrongly to some, and misunderstood by others who really know something about it. There is the promise of tragi-comic entanglements; and then, quite suddenly, Pedro hands the passive Hero over to Claudio in accordance with their original compact, and the story of the Proxy Wooing collapses to an ignominious end.

Claudio, the sulky wooed-for, says a few ungracious words; Hero, the inanimate wooed, says precisely nothing at all. The story is dismissed, and is never referred to again by anyone.

> If I was so soon to be done for,
> I wonder what I was begun for.

"Tarry a little: there is something else." At l. 189, Q. has the stage-direction, *Enter the Prince, Hero, Leonato, John and Borachio and Conrade*. The last three, the villains who have begun to make trouble out of the proxy wooing, have not a line allotted to them in the scene, and they are clearly in the way; for although the actual date of Hero's wedding is discussed and settled here, we find them in a later scene entirely ignorant of this important point. Why then do their names occur when their persons are unwanted? Because this was originally the *dénouement* of the Proxy Wooing story, and they were necessary then. When the complications were unravelled, the villains had to be exposed. An exposure is, in the present text, impossible; first, because there is scarcely anything to expose, and next because the villains are required for further villainy in the next story. Exposed and discredited villains in Act II can't proceed to be successful villains of the same kind in Act III of the same play. The exposure has vanished, but the names have remained in the stage-direction of Q. The mistake was remedied in the Folio, which has simply, *Enter the Prince*, the entry of Leonato and Hero being put forward to the entry of Claudio and Beatrice. The names of the three villains properly disappear.

(3) *The Second and Third Plots*

Thus the piece is well on through the second Act, and all it has given us in the way of story is a plot that definitely ends here. We have had (let us recall) the fairly elaborate beginning of a Proxy Wooing comedy, a brief glimpse of the victim in the toils of misunderstanding, and an abrupt and definite ending.

Immediately after (II. I. 308) begins the Second Plot, the entanglement of Beatrice and Benedick. This is the

one fully consistent story in the play and we need not dwell upon it.

Act II. Sc. 2 introduces us once again to Don John, who observes, as if it were a new fact just brought to his notice, "It is so, the Counte Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato," and the obliging Borachio just as suddenly replies, "Yea, my lord, but I can crosse it." Then is unfolded the beginning of the Third Plot, the Unchastity Plot, as we may call it. The extraordinarily abrupt and unrelated opening of this fresh story sounds like a part, not merely of a new plot, but of a new play.

The parallelism between this plot scene and the earlier (I. 3) is singularly unfortunate, as it suggests that Don John and his henchmen assemble regularly for their daily conspiracy. It is tempting to think that originally the two scenes did not belong to the same play. No one has any right to say that *Much Ado* as we have it represents a compound of two other plays; but at least we can say that it represents a meeting, but not a mingling, of two different stories told about the same people. Certainly with II. 2 we begin all over again. The villains hatch a plot. Not the least reference is made to the past. Claudio has already been deceived by Don John and Borachio about Hero, and he not only takes no action (even in words) against the deceivers, but, when we reach III. 2. 73, and the same two villains present a *second* disreputable report about Hero, he believes them a *second* time without any question. We called the parallelism of the two plot scenes unfortunate; the parallelism of the two accusation scenes is almost shocking. John makes a grave charge about Hero to Claudio and Pedro; he has already made a false charge about Hero and Pedro to Claudio, but no one thinks of recalling the fact. Is it credible that even Claudio (to say nothing of Pedro) should swallow a second foul story from the same tainted source? Here it is more than tempting, it is almost necessary to think that originally the two scenes did not belong to the same play.

(4) *Weakness of the Unchastity Plot*

One result of this juxtaposition of two distinct stories is that neither is well told. The Proxy Wooing complication is abandoned too soon for effect; the Unchastity story does not carry a moment's conviction. Borachio, a drunken hanger-on, who never appears on equal terms with the grandees of the story, who is at one and the same moment so unknown as to be "entertained for a perfumer" and so familiar as to have had a year-old intrigue with one of the household, offers freely to declare that he has had a long criminal association with the daughter of the Governor, a lady great enough to be wooed by a king for his most favoured noble. He sees no danger in the declaration—he anticipates nothing from the fury of a father, the wrath of a lover and the displeasure of a king. In none of the parallel stories is there a point so weak. And Borachio himself is the feeblest of villains. His end is as tame as his beginning, for his instant and abject collapse is as incredible as his rash assumption of guilt. It is an odd rascal who begins by putting his own head in the noose, and ends by pleading to have it tightened.

In addition to playing the villain himself, he undertakes to persuade a waiting-woman, Margaret (with whom he is on terms of midnight intimacy), to impersonate Hero, so that he audibly calls her Hero and she calls him Claudio. Why "Claudio"? If Hero imagined that the midnight wooer was Claudio, she would be as innocent as if she had imagined that the proxy wooer was Claudio. Even if we accept the suggestion that "Claudio" is here a mistake for "Borachio" the case is not much better, for then Margaret must know that there is something questionable, first in her being there at all, and next in her being required to assume her mistress's name and garments while Borachio retains his own. No such interview is possible without guilty collusion on the part of the girl. Yet what happens? Margaret appears next morning before the mistress whom she has impersonated, and behaves as if nothing had happened. That mistress is accused of talking at midnight with a man at a window, is publicly repudiated, and left

for dead. The girl who has actually talked at midnight in her mistress's clothes and name with a man at a window says never a word about it; and at the end of the tragic day, when the house is plunged into desolation, she appears in the garden exchanging broad jests with Benedick, and another girl, Ursula, has to come and tell him that Hero is guiltless. After all that, Margaret is expressly declared to be innocent, even by Leonato himself.

The actual charge of unchastity made in such circumstances is not even theatrically convincing. There is no dramatic case. Hero talks with a man. Well, where is the man? We do not hear his accusation in the play, because the accusation could not have been made. His confession of "a thousand" secret encounters would revolt the spectator and ruin the scene. The charge, I say, does not begin to be convincing, because there is not, and could not be, any confrontation of accuser and accused; and if the accuser is not producible, the accusation disappears with him. But he was actually seen talking with a girl at the window. The answer is simple. Margaret (innocent by hypothesis) knows she was the girl, and can innocently explain. If the reader examines the Ariosto and Bandello stories he will see that the accusation in each could with ease be maintained and with difficulty be refuted. The charge against Hero could not be maintained for five minutes. It would refute itself automatically. Borachio, the chief accuser and joint accused, is never mentioned. No one asks a single question about him; and when the tragic scene is all over and the mystery solved, Hero's own father is still so ignorant (and uninterested) that he has to have the man pointed out to him.

(5) *Character of Claudio*

There is scarcely a rag of credibility in a story that causes a king and a count to conduct themselves like a pair of ill-bred and over-stimulated brawlers. Of Pedro we need say little, as he is an unimportant shadow of royalty. Claudio is much more interesting. In many ways he represents a familiar type of young Englishman—the well-

connected person of the usual antecedents, feather-headed and fickle-minded, conscious of social advantages, insistent on privilege, oblivious of civic duty, indefatigable in the pursuit of pleasure, insanely attached to form, always ready for a "rag" (what is the Beatrice and Benedick plot but a first-rate "rag"?), ready to fall in love instantly, to propose one day, marry the next, and repent the day after, intensely selfish, quick to take offence, blindly furious in paying back supposed slights or injuries—and yet, after all, a pleasant, agreeable fellow, with good stuff in him, and as physically fearless as he is mentally and morally timorous. We can understand him better now. Claudio to-day would drive a racing-car at Brooklands or pilot an aeroplane across the Atlantic. In the tragic years of the war, he would have gone "over the top" with a joke and died with a smile. The pity is that Claudio has never begun to learn the real elements of national duty, or to understand that he owes any obligation to anyone outside his own set; and we have to have a war to discover all the good there is in him. Claudio, the almost insufferable young man-about-town, goes to the Front and "bears himself beyond the promise of his age, doing in the figure of a lamb the feats of a lion." The problem about Claudio is how to teach him the arts of peace.

(6) *Compensations of the Story*

But readers and playgoers alike agree that the Claudio-Hero story is the least attractive part of *Much Ado*. It is not a piece of pure romance like the story of Olivia and Viola in *Twelfth Night*, where we do not ask for material credibility. It must be taken seriously, or it fails; and we cannot take it seriously. It is not a good story, partly because it is not a story at all, but two stories, unrelated and mutually obstructive. How there came to be two stories; whether parts of two plays were hastily linked together for rapid production; whether a play, begun with one story, was rapidly completed with another more spectacular; or whether (as critics generally suggest) Shakespeare used the Proxy Wooing complication merely to exhibit the suspicious mind of Claudio more fully

prepared for an instant reception of the graver charge: these are questions that no one can answer with authority. The last suggestion seems to me by far the least satisfactory, for even in romantic drama the young lover ought not to be twice deceived by the same villain in the same way. Moreover, the two stories, though they meet, never unite. The earlier suspicion is never suggested as an excuse for the later. All we have a right to say in answer to our questions is that here and there in the play we can detect gaps unfilled, inconsistencies unsmoothed, and traces of revision not quite obliterated. The play is knit together by the capital story of Beatrice and Benedick, and further recommended by the humours of the parochial officials. Dogbery and Verges are among Shakespeare's greatest triumphs in that kind. Their completeness is amazing when we consider how little we really see of them. Dogbery just blunders into the story and out of it almost immediately, yet we seem to know all about him—we can figure his progress from solid youth to mature constablery, and imagine him rounding and ripening to retirement. In a special sense, Dogbery is an admirable example, not merely of humorous invention, but of all artistic creation: Shakespeare liked him, and so he lives.

(XII) A PROSE COMEDY

(1) *Shakespeare's early prose*

Perhaps the most remarkable peculiarity of *Much Ado about Nothing* is that it is the prose comedy of a poet. Shakespeare had already shown his mastery of prose in several earlier plays—in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, in *Romeo and Juliet* and in *The Merchant of Venice*, for example. The almost contemporary *As You Like It* and *Henry IV* contain many admirable prose passages. But though in the last named we think often of Falstaff and his friends, we do not, as a rule, remember the prose of these plays before the verse. Their general note or movement is that of verse dramas. Indeed, if we omit *Henry IV* and consider the others, we usually find ourselves remem-

bering their excellent prose as an after-thought. It is all the other way with *Much Ado*. A mention of that play suggests instantly to us the polished prose of Beatrice and Benedick, or the humorous prose of Dogbery and the Watch; it is only by an effort that we remember the scenes in verse. As a matter of fact, in the whole play (and it is not short) there are barely six hundred lines of metrical writing, even though we count as verse some passages originally printed as prose. Indeed, we can say, without any qualification, that all the best of the play is in prose and that nearly all the worst is in verse.

(2) *Shakespeare's prose excellence*

And how excellent the prose is, both dialogue and solo! With what delight we hear the tense, brief utterances of Beatrice and Benedick, after the windy rhetoric of the church scene! How we enjoy the polite and deadly exchanges of the challenge scene, after the two old men have been "carrying on" in the stretchëd metre of their antique song! The prose of Shakespeare is really prose: it is not merely verse without the metre. Let us illustrate this by a comparison. Some ten years before Shakespeare, was born John Lyly, whose name the histories of literature have passed on to us with a label that does him less than justice. Lyly wrote *Euphues*, but he was not a Euphuist. He was certainly a mannered writer—a writer with what we call a trick of style—and (if we may dare to say so) he loved an antithesis more than he loved justice. As Bagehot said of Gibbon, Lyly wrote a style in which it is difficult to tell the truth; but nevertheless he wrote very carefully and he wrote very well. How his imitators exaggerated his mannerism does not concern us here. Lyly's own place in the history of English prose is both honourable and important.

Nearly twenty years before *Much Ado* was published, Lyly had written a "tragicall comedie," *Alexander and Campaspe*—or *Campaspe*, as it is sometimes briefly called. Except for the songs (one of which is known to everybody) the play is in prose, and in very good prose, too. Let us quote a lengthy passage.

(3) *Lyly's* Campaspe

In these speeches (one of which instantly recalls a couple of lines in the present play) Hephestion is reproaching Alexander for his infatuation:

Alex. Hephestion, how doe you like the sweet face of Campaspe?

Hephest. I cannot but commend the stout courage of Timoclea.

Alex. Without doubt Campaspe had some great man to her father.

Hephest. You know Timoclea had Theagines to her brother.

Alex. Timoclea still in thy mouth? Art thou not in love?

Hephest. Not I.

Alex. Not with Timoclea, you meane. Wherein you resemble the lapwing, who crieth most where her nest is not: and so you lead me from espying your love with Campaspe, you crie Timoclea.

Hephest. Could I as well subdue kingdomes as I can my thoughts, or were I as far from ambition as I am from love, all the world would account me as valiant in armes as I know my-selfe moderate in affection.

Alex. Is love a vice?

Hephest. It is no vertue.

Alex. Well, now shalt thou see what small difference I make betweene Alexander and Hephestion. And, sith thou hast beene alwaies partaker of my triumphes, thou shalt bee partaker of my torments. I love, Hephestion, I love! I love Campaspe,—a thing farre unfit for a Macedonian, for a king, for Alexander. Why hangest thou downe thy head, Hephestion, blushing to heare that which I am not ashamed to tell?

Hephest. Might my words crave pardon and my counsell credit, I would both discharge the duetie of a subject, for so I am, and the office of a friend, for so I will.

Alex. Speake, Hephestion; for whatsoever is spoken, Hephestion speaketh to Alexander.

Hephest. I cannot tell, Alexander, whether the report be more shamefull to be heard or the cause sorrowful to be beleeved. What, is the son of Philip, King of Macedon, become the subject of Campaspe, the captive of Thebes? Is that minde whose greatnes the world could not containe drawn within the compass of an idle alluring eie? Wil you handle the spindle with Hercules, when you should shake the speare with Achilles? Is the warlike sound of drum and trump turned to the soft noise of lyre and lute? the neighing of barbed steeds; whose lowdnes filled the aire with terrour and whose breathes dimmed the sun with

smoake, converted to delicate tunes and amorous glances? O Alexander, that soft and yielding mind should not bee in him whose hard and unconquered heart hath made so many yield. But you love! Ah griefe! But whom? Campaspe. Ah shame! A maide forsooth unknown, unnoble, and who can tell whether immodest? whose eyes are framed by art to enamour and whose heart was made by nature to enchant. Ay, but she is beautiful. Yea, but not therefore chaste. Ay, but she is comlie in all parts of the bodie. But she may be crooked in some part of the minde. Ay, but she is wise. Yea, but she is a woman. Beautie is like the black-berry, which seemeth red when it is not ripe, resembling precious stones that are polished with honie, which, the smoother they looke, the sooner they breake....Remember, Alexander, thou hast a campe to governe, not a chamber. Fall not from the armour of Mars to the arrows of Venus, from the fierie assaults of warre to the maidenly skirmishes of love, from displaying the eagle in thine ensigne to set down the sparrow.

We have given only part of Hephestion's harangue, but enough to show that the general texture of the prose, good as it is, is altogether too artful, too elaborate to be the prose of really successful drama. Indeed, we feel that it is not really true prose at all, but the raw material of verse. Let us set by it a prose passage from our present play—Benedick's complaint about the taunts of Beatrice at the masked ball:

O she misusde me past the indurance of a block: an oake but with one greene leafe on it, would have answered her: my very visor beganne to assume life, and scold with her: she tolde me, not thinking I had beene my selfe, that I was the prince's jester, that I was duller than a great thawe, huddleing jest upon jest, with such impossible conveiance upon me, that I stoode like a man at a marke, with a whole army shooting at me: she speakes poynyards, and every word stabbes: if her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no living neere her, she would infect to the north starre: I woulde not marry her, though she were endowed with al that Adam had left him before he transgrest. She would have made Hercules have turn'd spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too.

There can be no doubt about this passage. It is real prose. Moreover, it is real *dramatic* prose, that is, the kind of prose an actor can deliver on the stage as if it were the natural improvisation of a speaker with a sense of style. It has the natural *rubato* of conversation, not the see-saw

of antithetical balance. We cannot, indeed, call Shakespeare our first great modern prose writer, but I think we can call him our first writer of natural prose dialogue. *Much Ado* contains an abundance of examples.

(4) *Poetic Drama*

On the other hand, it has none of the great verse dialogues and solos that we think of as soon as we mention even such early plays as *The Merchant of Venice*, *Henry V* and *Richard II*. The best scene in verse is that at the opening of Act III, when the plot against Beatrice is hatched. There are good lines in the scene between Leonato and Anthony, and in the latter part of the church scene; but the earlier part of this does not ring true, and its protestations are altogether excessive. Of course we must never forget that dramatic speech in verse is heightened speech. Indeed, if it were not heightened it would not be dramatic. On a stage which can give us a convincing illusion of reality, characters can talk, as they do in modern drama, more or less "naturally," as we say, partly because their actions have the momentum given by the stage illusion. If a modern play shows us a burglar opening a safe, there is no need for words; we are convinced by the physical circumstances. But on an open platform, with no properties, the actor has to create illusion by words, and the words must therefore be charged with force and colour and warmth or they will fail to raise the emotional temperature of the hearers. In short, if the auditors cannot see the burglar opening the safe, they must be made to feel it. The dramatic poet presenting the exaltation or despair of human souls necessarily and legitimately makes use of what is called "rhetoric"—the something more than the merely naturalistic in speech. People do not habitually converse as Romeo and Juliet, or Macbeth and his wife converse. But Shakespeare in writing their speeches was not trying to convey merely a natural representation of talk, he was trying to convey something far greater, a sense of the mysterious impulses, the moving passions and the shuddering fears, of which the words are merely the con-

ventional symbols. That is the difference between the speech of poetic drama and the conversation in a drawing-room.

The danger of rhetoric is that it can easily become rant; and, in the hands of inferior writers, like some of Shakespeare's contemporaries and successors, it often becomes rant. Further, it is clear that the "groundlings" of Shakespeare's time loved rant, and that Shakespeare disliked them for demanding it. But he gave it to them, sometimes, for all that. When Laertes hears that his sister is drowned, he begins a speech of grief with the lines:

> Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
> And therefore I forbid my tears.

Do we not feel (as the acute, ironic sense of Anatole France discerned) that this touch of excess comes perilously near to the ridiculous? However, people liked that kind of excess in Shakespeare's time, and so they got it. Shakespeare's greatest poetic achievement is that he took the current rhetorical verse of the stage and sublimed it till it sounded like the speech of gods. Here and there the baser metal shows; and it shows, I think, in the church scene of *Much Ado*. Indeed, how could even Shakespeare be successful there? The point is not that the audience know Claudio and Pedro are the victims of deception, but that they know Claudio and Pedro haven't experienced *enough* deception to justify their roulades of rant. A mere word starts Claudio on a fantasia of voluble embroideries. Leonato says, quite simply and innocently, "I dare make his answer," and Claudio bursts out with his "O! what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do, not knowing what they do!" All of which is as true as that there are milestones on the Dover Road, but all of which is as utterly irrelevant as that other remarkable assertion. When Claudio protests his extraordinary self-control in not tempting the virtue of his betrothed—that in spite of all temptations he had been a model of "bashful sincerity and comely love," Hero interposes her modest question, "And seem'd I ever otherwise to you?" and Claudio replies in a speech that is nearly the most shocking in the play:

Out on thee seeming, I will write against it,
You seem to me as Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown:
But you are more intemperate in your blood,
Than Venus, or those pampred animals
That rage in savage sensuality.

This revolts us, as I have said, not only because we know that Hero is innocent, but because we know that Claudio's ground for thinking her guilty is absurdly small. We feel that he requires next to no evidence for her guilt and mountains of evidence for her innocence. Indeed, his speech is unintentionally ironic; for Claudio himself has nothing but the flimsiest of "seeming" to justify his scandalous vituperation. In short, the quantity of rhetoric is absurdly disproportionate to the quantity of truth known to the speaker, and we are unconvinced, and even disgusted. Really, of course, we are wrong in looking for commonsense or consistency in such speeches. The Elizabethan playgoer liked to hear these verse solos delivered *ore rotundo*, just as our Victorian parents and grandparents liked to hear Donizetti's Lucia intimate her madness in an elaborate duet of *fioriture* with the flute. They did not ask for dramatic sense or consistency in opera, they merely asked to hear Grisi and Mario sing. Nearly all the verse passages of *Much Ado* are concerned directly or indirectly with the Claudio-Hero story, a story which is too feeble in substance to be tragic, and too tragic in treatment to be romantic. The verse is thus placed at a cruel disadvantage: the more it moves us the less we like it. Let us agree, then, that the real excellence of *Much Ado* is in its prose; that the play is an admirable prose comedy, implicated with a much less admirable serious story in verse.

(XIII) THE VERSE OF THE PLAY

(1) *Some Metrical Elements*

Let us now consider the verse, not as expression, but as form.

The dramatic verse of Shakespeare is in general what is called "blank verse," the peculiarity of which is that

it is composed of rimeless lines containing (normally) five stresses and measures and (usually) ten syllables. It is impossible to frame any definition that will cover the whole of Shakespeare's dramatic verse, as he sometimes uses riming couplets and even stanza-forms (a few occurring in the present play), and occasionally interposes a line containing less or more than the normal ten syllables.

A short technical digression is necessary before we can discuss the verse of the play in detail. The metres, and even the measures, of our verse since Chaucer are more akin to Greek than to the older English. That is to say, the direct or indirect effects of an ancient artistic civilisation have been a more potent factor in the creation of English verse forms than our own ruder aesthetic origins were able to supply. Accordingly, the nomenclature of English metrical forms is largely Greek. Unfortunately the Greeks, only vaguely conscious of accent and measures, defined their terms *quantitatively*, that is, as relative *durations*, long or short. This system, which answered well enough for certain Greek metres, could not be applied to English. Quantity, of course, enters into English as into all verse; but the infrequency of strict quantitative forms has forced the other element, *accent*, into prominence. Strong accent falls oftener than not on a long syllable. Thus the second syllable in "make-weight" is distinctly stronger than the second syllable in "maker." So is the first. If the former word is put for the latter in a line the rhythm tends to be broken and retarded.

But though quantity influences our verse, the English poet does not definitely weave his pattern of "longs" and "shorts" as the Greek poet did. Accent is more prominent than quantity in English verse. There need be no confusion, then, in the use of the traditional Greek names and symbols if we understand that in English they mean one thing and in Greek another. Thinking in terms of *accent* we may thus describe the English arrangement of syllables:

trochee	s′s	as in *slówly*
iambus	ss′	as in *awáke*
dactyl	s′ss	as in *laud′ably*
anapaest	sss′	as in *appertain′*.

The Greek "long" and "short" signs are, however, so useful in making accent visible that they are usually retained, the long – standing in English for a strongly accented syllable and the short ⏑ for a less accented syllable. It should be noticed, however, that the signs when used in the English way sometimes contradict the actual quantities. Thus such words as *bankrupt*, *banker*, *batter*, *shepherd*, *pity*, all of which differ in quantity, are represented in English by precisely the same symbol | – ⏑ |, where | – ⏑ | stands for s′s and not for | 𝅗𝅥 ♪ | or | 2 1 |. In quantity *bankrupt* is just as long as *pitiless* and twice as long as *pity*, as we can see, if we write:

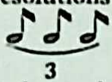
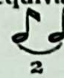
bankrupt	pitiless	bankrupt	pitiless
2 2	1 1 2	2 2	1 1 2

A mother using the word *pretty* to a baby says *pity-pity*, giving the whole of it just the length of *bankrupt*:

pity-pity	bankrupt
1 1 1 1	2 2

Nevertheless in English marking *bankrupt* and a single *pity* come out exactly alike, both having two syllables and the accent on the first, and both therefore being marked | – ⏑ |.

Quantitatively, | – ⏑ | is of the *double genus*, that is, the strong part (*thesis*) is *twice* the weak part (*arsis*). The foot | – ⏑ ⏑ | is of the *equal genus*, the strong part (*thesis*) being *equal* to the weak part (*arsis*). Expressed in musical notation this may be put thus: | – ⏑ | is | 𝅗𝅥 ♪ | or | 2 1 | which is equivalent to | ♪ ♪ ♪ | a three-time measure; and | – ⏑ ⏑ | is | 𝅗𝅥 ♪ ♪ | or | 2 1 1 | which is equivalent to | ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ | a two-time (or four-time) measure. Just as 𝅗𝅥 can be resolved into ♪ ♪ or ♪. 𝅘𝅥𝅯 so | – ⏑ | can be resolved into | ⁓ ⏑ | (the cyclic dactyl) or into | ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ | (the tribrach). In other words, *lively* and *livelier* can both be equal measures in the same line of quantitative verse. A measure in poetry as in music is the distance from one strong accent to the next. Thus the combination ⏑ –́ is not a measure, just as ♪ | 𝅗𝅥 is not a measure,

because a measure must obviously begin with the accented note. Even with a foot rule we measure from one definite mark to the next. Besides resolutions there can be equivalent substitutions. Just as  (triplet) and  (duplet) are time-equivalents in music (see for instance the "Habanera" in *Carmen*) so in a blank verse line we may find an occasional two-time measure taking the place of the more usual three-time measure.

(2) *Metre and Rhythm*

So far we have spoken of certain metrical elements. We must now consider *rhythm*, which the student must not suppose to be another name for *metre*. Metre is the skeleton, rhythm the living body. Metre is the mechanical movement of verse, rhythm is the free movement of verse within the metrical limits. If the word-movement synchronises exactly with the metrical movement (as in much bad blank verse) we get a tame and monotonous jog-trot; if the word-movement entirely disregards the metrical movement we have no longer verse, but prose; for good prose has rhythm but not metre. The poet's task is to get all the freedom that lies between monotony and anarchy. Blank verse lines are *metrically* equal to each other, that is, they have (as one would say in music) the same time-signature; but they are not *rhythmically* alike.

> One room he owned, the fifth part of a house,
> (WORDSWORTH.)

is a blank verse line; but so is

> A local habitation and a name;

or,

> And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars

or,

> The multitudinous seas incarnadine.

It is possible to stress these lines exactly (or almost exactly) in the same way; but it is impossible to *read* them in the same way. The *metre* of all is the same, the *rhythm* of each is distinct. A musical comparison may help us. Chopin wrote Valses which follow *metrically* the fixed three-four

movement, but flow *rhythmically* with almost complete independence of that basis, which, nevertheless, they acknowledge. Scarcely any two Valses of Chopin move in the same way, though their theoretical shape is the same[1]. And so, while the Blue Danube Waltz is a more practical piece of dance-music, the D flat Waltz is by far the more delightful invention. The poet who is a master of style can create inexhaustible beauty out of the counterpoint between his metre and his rhythm, and not the least of the rewards awaiting the student of Shakespeare is the delight of seeing the poet's mastery of verse develop from the pretty rippling movement of *Love's Labour's Lost* to the heart-shaking rhythms of *Macbeth*. In its infinite and exquisite variety of cadence, the blank verse of Shakespeare is one of the most marvellous instruments devised by man for the expression of human emotion.

(3) *Blank Verse*

And now as to the blank verse itself. For practical purposes English blank verse emerges as a definite form in the translation of the *Aeneid* made by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517–1547). Here are a few lines:

With this the sky gan whirl about the sphere:
The cloudy night gan thicken from the sea,
With mantles spread that cloaked earth and skies,
And eke the treason of the Greekish guile.
The watchmen lay dispers'd to take their rest,
Whose wearied limbs sound sleep had then oppress'd;
When, well in order comes the Grecian fleet,
From Tenedon towards the coasts well known,
By friendly silence of the quiet moon.

The occasional rimes are probably accidental. Blank verse is first used as a dramatic medium in *The Tragidie of Ferrex and Porrex* (also called *Gorboduc*) by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville, acted in 1561. Here is a specimen:

Lo here the end of Brutus' royal line,
And lo the entry to the wofull wrack
And utter ruin of this noble realm.

[1] In one familiar Valse (Op. 42) the melody line is accented so as to move in twos against the threes of the accompaniment

—The royal king and eke his sons are slain,
No ruler rests within the regal seat,
The heir, to whom the sceptre longs unknown...
Who seeth not now how many rising minds
Do feed their thoughts with hope to reach a realm?
And who will not by force attempt to winne
So great a gain, that hope persuades to have?

Normal blank verse (as we may call it) reaches its height in Marlowe, after whom came the one who so enlarged its scope and force that he remains supreme master of the measure though the poets of three centuries have tried to bend his bow.

Blank verse is usually described as a series of five iambic feet:

Disdain	and scorn	ride spark	ling in	her eyes
˘ –	˘ –	˘ –	˘ –	˘ –

Sometimes a foot is reversed:

Close by	the ground	to hear	our con	ference
– ˘	˘ –	˘ –	˘ –	˘ –

Sometimes there is an extra syllable:

I'll shew	thee some	attires	and have	thy coun	sel
˘ –	˘ –	˘ –	˘ –	˘ –	˘

Sometimes there are two extra syllables:

So rare	a gen	tleman	as Sign	ior Ben	edick
˘ –	˘ –	˘ –	˘ –	˘ –	˘ ˘

Sometimes a line appears a syllable short:

Dear	my lord	if you	in your	own proof
∧ –	˘ –	˘ –	˘ –	˘ –

Sometimes extra syllables appear both at the beginning and the end:

Not	to knit	my soul	to an	approv	ed wan	ton
˘	˘ –	˘ –	˘ –	˘ –	˘ –	˘

(4) *Another View*

But the traditional scansion of Shakespeare's verse has recently been challenged, notably in *A Study of Shakespeare's Versification*, by the late Rev. M. A. Bayfield, M.A. (Cambridge, 1920). He declares that the movement of Shakespeare's verse is not iambic at all, but trochaic—that the blank verse line is a series of five trochees, or

resolutions of the trochee. Lines of verse, like pieces of music, often begin with an *up-beat*—*anacrusis*, as it is technically called, the line so beginning being called *anacrustic*. According to Mr Bayfield, the blank verse line is not:

And on | my eye | lids shall | Conjec | ture hang |
⏑ – | ⏑ – | ⏑ – | ⏑ – | ⏑ – |

but

And | on my | eyelids | shall Con | jecture | hang |
⏑ | – ⏑ | – ⏑ | – ⏑ | – ⏑ | – ∧ |

"And" is the up-beat (*anacrusis*) and ∧ the sign of one beat rest.

But we must be careful. If | ⏑ – | is accepted in the English sense as being the same as *s s′*, that is, purely an affair of *accents*, the first arrangement is entitled to stand. If however *measuring* is introduced, then the second arrangement must be adopted, as the *measures* go from accent to accent. That is, we must not begin by saying that we will regard only the *accents*, and end by saying that we must regard only the *measures*. With measures we introduce the idea of quantity.

This is how Mr Bayfield states his view:

The scheme of the blank-verse line therefore is

(1) ⏑ | –́ ⏑ | –́ ⏑ | –́ ⏑ | –́ ⏑ | – ⏑ || (full)
(2) ⏑ | –́ ⏑ | –́ ⏑ | –́ ⏑ | –́ ⏑ | –́ ∧ || (checked)

(3) The up-beat may be omitted, leaving the first foot a trochee.

(4) The up-beat may be omitted and the line begin with a resolved foot—*the usual form when there is no up-beat*:

| ⏑⏑⏑ / ⁓⏑ | – ⏑ | – ⏑ | – ⏑ | – ⏑ ||

(5) Any foot may be trisyllabic.

(6) Any foot but the last may be quadrisyllabic.

(7) Any foot may be monosyllabic, being formed either by prolongation of the stressed syllable, or by a pause after it in place of the unstressed one.

(*The Measures of the Poets*, Cambridge, 1919.)

Let us illustrate these principles as far as we can from the present play, which happens to be one that Mr Bayfield barely mentions and from which he draws very few examples. The reader will remember the important fact that | – ⏑ | can be "resolved" into | ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ | or | ⁓ ⏑ |.

Here is a "full" line:

Then | go we | near her | that her | ear lose | nothing |
˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ |

Here is a "checked" line:

O | do not | do your | cousin | such a | wrong. |
˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ | – ∧ |

(This is the most usual form of blank verse.)

Here is a line with a double up-beat:

You will | say she | did em | brace me | as a | husband |
˘ ˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ |

Here is a line without up-beat and with a trochee for the first foot:

| Dear my | lord, if | you in | your own | proof |
| – ˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ | – ∧ |

The same line exhibits a monosyllabic foot at the end, there being a pause in place of the unstressed syllable—i.e. one beat rest.

Here is a line without up-beat and with a resolved foot for the first—a very common form:

| Hero it | self can | blot out | Hero's | virtue |
| ∼ ˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ |

Here are further examples of trisyllabic feet:

Resolution in the first foot:

| Saying I | lik'd her | ere I | went to | wars |
| ∼ ˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ | – ∧ |

Resolution in the second foot:

No | truly | Ursula | she is | too dis | dainful |
˘ | – ˘ | ∼ ˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ |

Resolution in the third foot:

I'll | make her | come I | warrant you | present | ly |
˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ | ˘ ˘ ˘ | – ˘ | – ∧ |

Resolution in the fourth foot:

If | silent | why a | block | moved with | none |
˘ | – ˘ | – ˘ | – ∧ | ∼ ˘ | – ∧ |

Resolution in the fifth foot:

Thou | pure im | pie | ty and | impious | purity |
˘ | – ˘ | –˘ | – ˘ | ∼ ˘ | ∼ ˘ |

a double resolution, the third foot very weak, probably | ˘ ˘ |.

Here are examples of double resolutions:

Resolutions in the first and second:

| Talk with a | ruffian | at her | chamber | window |

A similar example:

| That were im | possible | but I | pray you | both ∧ |

Resolutions in the second and third:

With | all pre | rogative | hence his am | bition | growing |

(*Tempest.*)

Resolutions in the third and fourth:

With | out of | fence to | utter them | thus pretty | lady |

Resolutions in the fourth and fifth:

Thou | pure im | pie | ty and | impious | purity |

Mr Bayfield cites this line as containing a quadrisyllabic foot. In that case the line would contain four measures. See p. lxxxiii.

Resolutions in the first and third, and two monosyllabic feet:

| Out of my | self ∧ | press me to | death with | wit ∧ |

Resolutions in the first and fourth and two monosyllabic feet:

| What shall be | come of | this ∧ | what will this | do ∧ |

Here is an exceptional line with three monosyllabic feet:

| Boys ∧ | apes ∧ | braggarts | jacks ∧ | milksops |

There are few clear examples of quadrisyllabic feet in *Much Ado.* One doubtful instance can be found in a speech (IV. I) printed as prose, but plainly metrical:

O! what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do, not knowing what they do.

This could be read as follows:

| O! ∧ | what men | dare do | what men | may do! |

| What men | daily do not | knowing | what they | do! ∧ |

But this, as I said, is doubtful in several respects. A much better example is:

Valuing of	her why	she O	she is	falne
˘ ˘ ˘ ˘	– ˘	– ˘	– ˘	– ∧

Numerous examples of resolutions drawn from other plays will be found in Mr Bayfield's volume, which, whether its doctrine and notation be accepted or not, should help to quicken the student's ear to the music of Shakespeare's verse.

(5) *Rhythm before Metre*

The wise student will not take sides in a party war of trochee against iambus, or commit himself at once to any rigid scheme of metrics. There is no evidence that Shakespeare had any scheme. We do not know that he had any theoretical view of blank verse, but we do know that he had a vital sense of rhythm. Shakespeare was the master, not the servant of verse, and he used it with imperious freedom, commanding it to sound what music he willed, from pleasing intricacies of tune hung about with rimes, to subtle complexities of expression shaped, it would seem, by inward passion rather than by outward law, but formal and lawful still, even though form and law do not lie open and evident. Shakespeare's development in verse is a passing from simplicity to complexity; and the student must therefore think of the poet's rhythm rather than of his metre. He must suit the action to the words rather than the words to the action. The greater verse of Shakespeare, like some of the music of Bach and of certain modern composers, tends to be unbarred, that is, to reject mechanical spacing, and to set its own implicit bars and measures; but we must never forget that the bars and measures are there for us to discover. If we take pains to feel where the natural pauses and accents of the line should fall, the bars will take care of themselves. Even within groups of apparently simple movement there is no mechanical rule. Bach, the most Shakespearean of composers in many ways, but specially in the wonderful freedom and complexity of his rhythms, can again be cited in illustration.

"Four semi-quavers are for Bach not four semi-quavers, but the raw material for quite varied shapes, according to how he groups them; thus:



(*J. S. Bach*, by Albert Schweitzer.)

(6) *Other Measures*

Shakespeare occasionally uses the "Alexandrine," or verse with six stresses. The only example in *Much Ado* occurs at the end of the rough quatrain that closes the church scene proper:

Per | haps is | but pro | longed have | patience | and en | dure |
⌣ | – ⌣ | – ⌣ | – ⌣ | – ⌣ | – ⌣ | – ∧ |

Shakespeare's use of resolutions in his verse developed with maturity, and he shares with Swinburne the distinction of using more than any other English poet. The resolutions give his verse its wonderful variety of movement and "add the gleam" that only the lyrical poets seem to catch. Indeed, his combination of normal and resolved feet often gives us actual lyric metres. Thus:

| Call her | forth brother | here's the | Friar | ready |
| – ⌣ | ⁓ ⌣ | – ⌣ | – ⌣ | – ⌣ |

resembles the "hendecasyllabic" line,

All composed in a metre of Catullus.

This from *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (there is no example in *Much Ado*):

| Being | nimble | footed he | hath out | run us |
| – ⌣ | – ⌣ | ⁓ ⌣ | – ⌣ | – ⌣ |

is a Sapphic.

But | you are | more in | temperate | in your | blood |
⌣ | – ⌣ | – ⌣ | ⁓ ⌣ | – ⌣ | – ∧ |

is like the greater Alcaic. Parts of lines, too, seem to be lyric metres; but we need not go into that here.

(7) *Organic Verse*

So far we have considered mainly the movement of single lines. But a verse passage is a sequence of lines, and its beauty depends upon the way in which those lines

become symphonic, that is, become blended into a unity with a movement of its own. A passage of verse should be an organic whole, not an assemblage of parts. A reference to the examples quoted from Surrey and *Gorboduc* will show that these passages are, for the most part, separate statements one line long. Such lines are said to be "end-stopped," because each line is complete in itself. Only the immature or inferior poet thinks and writes in lines. The present play, though certainly not immature, contains many examples of end-stopped passages. See, for instance, Pedro's speech (I. I) beginning, "What need the bridge much broader than the flood." Long stretches of verse thus written are not satisfying, because we feel that the lines are merely put together and not joined together. A poet's skill is shown in his power to weave these separate lines into one texture of verse doubly beautiful with its pattern of the parts and its pattern of the whole; just as a tapestry is made, not by putting beautiful coloured silks side by side, but by joining their separate beauties into a picture. Shakespeare's power over verse grew steadily, till at last he was able to write those great fugal passages in which metre, rhythm and content unite to make a great dramatic movement.

Much Ado, weakest in its verse, has no such passages. Here and there we find lines that are "run on" instead of being "end-stopped," but they do not run very far. We get a passage like this:

> Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
> Misprising what they look on, and her wit
> Values itself so highly that to her
> All matter else seems weak: she cannot love
> Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
> She is so self-endeared;

but the best this play can show is far indeed from the large utterance of *The Tempest* or *Macbeth*. However, we must not be ungrateful. The verse of *Much Ado* is good of its kind, even though its kind is not the best.

(XIV) LATER HISTORY OF THE SHAKESPEARE CANON

(1) *The Folios*

As we have already pointed out, *Much Ado* appeared first in 1600 and was not reprinted till it appeared in the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays, the famous First Folio of 1623. So many stupid accusations about English neglect of Shakespeare are made and repeated that the recital of a few facts may be useful to the student. Shakespeare was the most highly esteemed and most popular dramatist of his time. Contemporary tributes to him are numerous and almost always highly laudatory. Remembering that plays were written for performance on the stage and not for circulation as books, we should note with special interest that the first collection of Shakespeare's scattered plays made in 1623, imperfect though it may have been, was a great tribute, and was meant to be a great tribute, to the dead writer. Only one such collection had been made before, the much slighter Ben Jonson folio of 1616. The First Folio Shakespeare of 1623 is not merely that, it is actually the first folio of collected and newly-printed plays in the history of English literature. Another edition was called for nine years later. This Second Folio (1632) is little more than a reprint of the first. The Third Folio (1663) is remarkable because it contains seven extra plays, only one of which, *Pericles*, is generally accepted as Shakespearean. The Fourth Folio (1685) is a reprint of the Third in later spelling. None of the Folios included the poems and sonnets. The reader will notice, then, that within seventy years of Shakespeare's death, four separate editions of a very large and costly volume were called for. Moreover, Shakespeare never left the stage. True, the plays were often mangled, sometimes altered, sometimes coarsened, sometimes modernized (as we should say), sometimes amalgamated with other works —Davenant, for instance, produced for the public of Charles II's time a blend of *Much Ado* and *Measure for Measure*; still, they were played, and the name of Shakespeare was never forgotten. Even in the present en-

lightened century we have seen in London a performance of *The Tempest* in which the whole of Shakespeare's first scene was ruthlessly cut out to make room for a realistic shipwreck. It is not for us to call other centuries names.

(2) *Pepys and Shakespeare*

Let us cite as a witness that ever delightful connoisseur, Samuel Pepys, a man whom Shakespeare would have loved and would almost certainly have put into a play: Pepys saw bad versions of Shakespeare on the stage, and sometimes liked him and sometimes didn't; but at least he saw him steadily, even though he did not see him whole. He bought one of the Folios in 1664. He saw *Hamlet* many times—thrice in one year—and could never speak highly enough of Betterton's acting as the Prince; he bought a quarto of *Henry IV* and, having formed high expectations from his reading, was disappointed in the performance. Later, however, he calls it "a good play," and at another performance specially enjoys Falstaff's speech on Honour. *Henry V* he liked less, but was in a very uncomfortable seat. A bad seat is a good reason for disliking any play. Davenant's version of *Macbeth* he saw constantly and greatly enjoyed. *The Merry Wives* he saw two or three times and did not like. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* he saw once only and denounced it as insipid and ridiculous, which, as performed in 1662 with "good dancing and some handsome women," it may well have been, though we are surprised that Pepys should say so. When he saw *Othello* in 1660 "well done," "a very pretty lady that sat by me called out to see Desdemona smothered." True, after reading it on his way to Deptford by water he found it a "mean thing" after *The Adventures of Five Houres*. He did not like *Romeo and Juliet*, which, however, he confesses was very badly acted. A perversion of *The Taming of the Shrew* he found silly. *The Tempest* (a dreadful adaptation) he saw constantly with pleasure, the songs giving special delight to his musician's ear. The ever-delightful *Twelfth Night* he called weak and silly—but he saw it at least thrice. Indeed, we may scorn the critical faculty of our seventeenth century Pepys if we like; but

he saw very nearly fifty performances of plays derived immediately or remotely from Shakespeare. How many twentieth century playgoers can say as much?

(3) *The Unities*

English criticism in the late Stuart period was, like English life in general, largely influenced by French taste. The French classic tragedies of Racine and Corneille were imitations of the Greek, and the nature of a Greek dramatic performance demanded that the action of a piece should happen in one short space of time, in one place, and be one uninterrupted story without second or third plots. These conditions were known as the Unities of Time, Place and Action. Out of these was evolved a fourth Unity, the Unity of Kind, which demanded that a tragic piece should be uniformly tragic and a comic piece uniformly comic, with no mingling of the kinds. The three great Unities rendered necessary by the conditions of Greek acting were taken by the French to be the necessary laws of drama in general. To French taste, then, such dramas as Shakespeare's, where time, place, action and kind are handled with complete freedom, seemed as barbarous as Liszt's *Dante Symphony* would have appeared to an eighteenth century audience in Vienna assembled to hear a symphony of Haydn.

(4) *Dryden*

Dryden, greatest of our early critics, and one of the greatest of all our critics, discusses the Unities in his *Essay of Dramatick Poesy*: but though his predilection for "regularity," and for Ben Jonson as the first "regular" English dramatist, is strong, observe his remarks on Shakespeare in an essay written in 1668:

> It will be first necessary to speak somewhat of *Shakespear* and *Fletcher*, his [i.e. Jonson's] Rivals in Poesie; and one of them in my Opinion, at least his equal, perhaps his superior.
>
> To begin then with *Shakespear*; he was the Man who of all Modern and perhaps Ancient Poets, had the largest and most comprehensive Soul. All the Images of Nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily:

When he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, gave him the greatest commendation: He was naturally learn'd: He needed not the Spectacles of Books to read Nature: he look'd inwards and found her there. I cannot say he is every where alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of Mankind. He is many times flat, insipid, his Comick Wit degenerating into Clenches, his Serious swelling into Bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him: No man can say he ever had a fit subject for his Wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of Poets,

Quantum lenta solent, inter viburna cupressi.

The consideration of this made *Mr Hales* of *Eaton* say, That there was no subject of which any Poet ever Writ, but he would produce it much better treated of in *Shakespear*; and however others are now generally prefer'd before him, yet the Age wherein he liv'd, which had Contemporaries with him, *Fletcher* and *Johnson*, never equal'd them to him in their esteem: And in the last King's Court when *Ben's* reputation was at highest, Sir *John Suckling*, and with him the greater part of the Courtiers set our *Shakespear* far above him.

That is not bad for the age of Elegance and Literary Deportment,—especially when we consider what imperfect materials Dryden and his contemporaries had for an understanding of Shakespeare.

(5) *The bad text*

Let the young student select a play of Shakespeare hitherto unknown to him, turn to a facsimile of a Quarto or of the First or Second Folio, try to read and understand what he finds printed, and he will begin to discover what tremendous impediments there were to a true appreciation of Shakespeare in the seventeenth century. Not only was the language difficult in itself, it was archaic, and it was presented in very ill-printed volumes full of errors. Further, a point often overlooked, many of the plays had no act or scene divisions whatever. Take the present play for example: the Quarto *Much Ado* of 1600 is ostensibly one unbroken composition continuously printed, without the least mention of act or scene or change of place. Outwardly it appears to be as complete as the most elegant critic could desire. A late seventeenth

century reader, therefore, finding a play unbrokenly printed, would probably expect continuity (or unity) of time, stability (or unity) of place, and congruity (or unity) of action; and, finding nothing of the sort, but, instead, sudden and unindicated changes of place, leaps of time, and incongruity of spirit, might excusably dismiss the whole thing as tiresomely archaic, uncouth, incomprehensible and barbarous.

(6) *The Early Editors*

Not till the beginning of the eighteenth century was the problem of preparing a text of Shakespeare for ordinary readers actually faced. The first editor was Nicholas Rowe, who, in 1709–10, produced an edition in seven volumes, with a biographical sketch incorporating some still floating traditions. It is to Rowe that we are indebted for such aids to reading as the lists of *dramatis personae*, the division of the text into acts and scenes, the clearly marked exits and entrances, and so forth. The text was poor. Rowe was not a good editor, but at least he was the first, and all honour to him. Later critics have been scornful of poor Rowe; but after all, it was Rowe who first lit the candles, swept the room, and set the floor for better editors, who, thus being helped, inhabit there.

The second editor was Pope, whose edition appeared in 1725. Pope, too, was a bad editor in the textual sense, but his essay on Shakespeare is remarkably sympathetic when the totally different poetic ideals of the writer are considered. Pope contributed in another way to the popularity of Shakespeare, for, in 1734 Tonson, the publisher,

issued all the plays in Pope's text in separate 12mo. volumes, which were distributed by book-pedlars at a low price throughout the country. This was the first attempt to distribute Shakespeare's works in a cheap form; it proved so successful that a rival publisher started a like venture. (Lee, *Life of Shakespeare*.)

The tremendous textual problems of the Folios and Quartos were first thoroughly attacked by the third editor, Lewis Theobald, who brought out an edition in 1733. Theobald had, with much justification, dealt harshly with

Pope's editorial failure, and Pope retorted with *The Dunciad*. But Theobald remains the first great editor. "Over 300 original corrections or emendations which he made in his edition have become part and parcel of the authorised canon" (Lee, *op. cit.*). The fourth editor was Sir Thomas Hanmer (1744), the fifth the preposterous Bishop Warburton (1759), the sixth, the great Dr Johnson (1765), whose Preface is a landmark in Shakespearean criticism, and should be read by all students of literature. The seventh editor was Edward Capell (1768), who did excellent editorial work. We need not pursue the tale. Steevens, and after him, Malone, produced editions embodying the best features of all the preceding issues, and, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the text of Shakespeare was well in hand and a succession of Shakespearean scholars established. The reader should gather from this recital two facts, first, that, with varying heights of enthusiasm, a genuine interest in Shakespeare has existed unbroken since his own time; and next, that a modern text of Shakespeare, so cheap to buy and easy to read, embodies critical labours extending over two centuries.

(XV) NEED FOR A RETURN TO SHAKESPEARE

And now, having inherited all the aids to reading contributed by the first editors we must try to get away from them and back to Shakespeare. The well-intended additions of Rowe and his successors are in many quarters regarded as part of the genuine text. Theatrical managers open, let us say, *Henry IV*, *Pt I*, and find "Act 1. Sc. 1, London, The Palace," and presently, "Sc. 2, London. An apartment of the Prince's"; and decide that they must have a royal setting for the first scene and a princely setting for the second—such being Shakespeare's manifest desire. But those stage-directions are not Shakespeare's at all. Indeed, they are not even stage-directions. They were written in by Rowe and were meant as helps to readers, not instructions to scene-painters. So much attention has been paid to these unauthentic stage-directions during the last century of stage-history that they have assumed in certain

minds an importance beyond that of the authentic text. Actor-managers have always been ready to sacrifice Shakespeare's verse to Rowe's stage-directions. In fact, the whole of their stage method was fatal to the right production of a Shakespeare play—a point we shall recur to later. The *Globe Shakespeare* gives as its first stage-direction in the present play "Before Leonato's house." There is no direction at all in the original text and nothing in the scene to indicate the setting. The same may be said of the next two directions, "A room in Leonato's house," and "A hall in Leonato's house." In the present text, for the sake of convenience, we have followed the traditional division into acts and scenes; but the reader must remember, however, that such divisions are editorial and not original, and that precise locality in any scene usually matters very little. Almost any scene in any play of Shakespeare can be acted without reference to place or time.

(XVI) SHAKESPEAREAN PUNCTUATION

There is another textual point of considerable importance, already mentioned in the Preface. The punctuation of modern English is, or is intended to be, grammatical. Thus, in the sentence, "The king, whose faults were numerous, hated his brother, whose faults were few," the commas indicate the parentheses; in the sentence, "A king whose faults are numerous will rarely forgive a brother whose faults are few," there are no commas, because the qualification is integral, not parenthetic. Or to put the matter more simply, in the first sentence a statement is made simply about "the king," even though there is an additional fact recorded; in the second sentence a statement is made about "A king whose faults are numerous." That is to say, in modern English, stops are inserted upon principles of grammar or logic. But in the text of Shakespeare the stops are not inserted upon such principles. Indeed, at first sight they appear to be inserted upon no principles whatever. It has been maintained, however, by Mr Percy Simpson in his *Shakespearian Punctuation* that the stops are a guide to speech; and there is much plausibility in

the argument. Thus, in the *Globe* text, an early speech of the Messenger is printed thus:

I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him; even so much that joy could not show itself modest enough without a badge of bitterness.

In Q. and F. it appears thus:

I have already delivered him letters, and there appeares much joy in him, even so much, that joy could not shew it selfe modest enough, without a badge of bitternesse.

It will easily be seen by actual trial that the modern version cannot be read intelligently as it is written, and that the original can. The same is true of the sentence quoted in the Preface. It is further alleged that, in the original, a full stop indicates a more decisive arrest of voice than a colon; and so on. We need not consider the technical arguments by which these views are supported, and, indeed, we need not accept them unless we wish. The real reason for the use of the Shakespearean punctuation in the present text is simply that the punctuation is Shakespearean. The student of Shakespeare should have Shakespeare's punctuation before him, not an editor's. Though it seems odd at first, practice makes it natural. The reader may be helped if he remembers two old rules, still inculcated by professors of elocution: "Use a downward inflection of the voice when you have finished a statement, and do not use a falling inflection if you have not finished." The present text gives mainly the punctuation of Q., with occasional readings from F.

(XVII) THE SHAKESPEARE STAGE

In section XV we rèmarked that producers of Shakespeare on the stage have often failed to secure a good Shakespearean representation, simply because they have followed the editorial hints to readers as slavishly as if they were Shakespeare's own stage-instructions. They have attempted to give visible being to every editorial indication of place, and have cumbered the stage with their much scenery. Now, in itself, scenery on the stage is a good thing, rather than a bad thing, and not to be condemned;

scenery is bad only as long as it interferes with the continuity of the play by necessitating intervals for the setting; and it almost invariably does that. In a modern play the end of a scene means a descent of the curtain, a raising of the lights, and an interval. In a Shakespeare play it means nothing of the sort. A play of Shakespeare is meant to be acted continuously. It may not have technical unity, but it ought to have theatrical continuity. When a play of Shakespeare is produced under modern scenic conditions, people sometimes complain that the piece is long and tiresome. But it is not the play that is tiresome, it is the superfluity of "waits" that is tiresome. Changes of scene mean breaches of action. The effect of all the scene-shifting is that the play appears to be in fifteen or twenty acts. No play, by whomsoever written, can possibly retain its interest when it is thus minced into fragments.

A short consideration of the stage in Shakespeare's day should help us to understand how an Elizabethan play should be presented. Certain details are still disputed by enthusiasts, but the major features are fairly well agreed upon. The young student must dismiss from his mind all ideas of a modern theatre. It will help him if he thinks of something entirely different, namely, a Promenade Concert at the Queen's Hall in London—but he will have to suppose that the central part of the roof is wanting. Now here we have a circular building devoted to artistic pleasure. The cheapest places are in the open circular area, where the auditors can stand and listen, or "promenade" and listen. One must be youthful, enthusiastic and perhaps even a little insensitive to "promenade" with enjoyment. Some of the auditors, anxious to be as near the performers as possible, pay more money and take seats on the platform itself. Others, desirous of listening with more comfort, or of being away from promenaders who fidget and smoke cigarettes, pay still more money and are accommodated in two balconies that run round the building, one above the other, but not quite round; for, though the hall is circular, a large segment is occupied by a platform, several feet above the floor, and rising in its remoter portions to a considerable height.

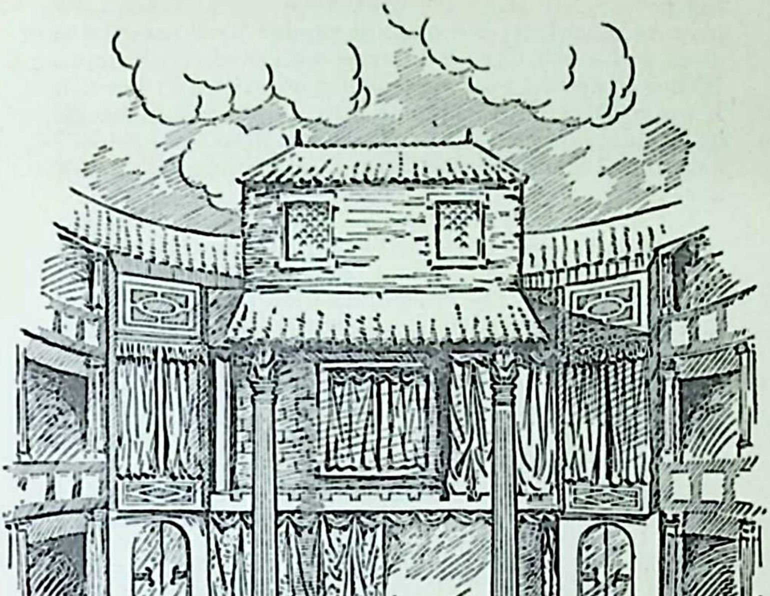
The performance of a Shakespeare play at the Globe Theatre on Bankside bore a much greater resemblance to a Promenade Concert than to a performance of a modern play in a modern theatre. Don't imagine that complete "illusion" is necessary for artistic enjoyment. At a Promenade Concert you can see an enormous crowd rapt in deep enjoyment of the first act of *Die Walküre* given without the faintest attempt at illusion—with Siegmund and Sieglinde in modern evening dress, with no scenery and none of the theatrical "effects" that Wagner loved not wisely but too well. At the Globe Theatre Burbage enthralled his auditors in *Hamlet* in circumstances rather similar. There was a circular building with a part occupied by a platform; there were the promenaders or "groundlings" in the cheapest places, mostly young, enthusiastic and rather insensitive, more appreciative of broad effects than of the fine shades. And no doubt they "drank tobacco"—though not in the form of cigarettes. Just as at the Promenade Concerts there are hot devotees of Wagner or Bach or Beethoven or Chaikovsky, so at the theatre there were the aggressive adherents of Marlowe or Shakespeare or Ben Jonson or Webster. There were connoisseurs on the stage, there were superior persons in the balconies, and there were the performers themselves on something much more like a platform than what we call a stage. In a modern theatre the proscenium is like a gigantic picture-frame with a curtain over it. The curtain goes up and you see a living picture, an elaborate imitation of a room or a garden, designed to produce the maximum of illusion. In one recent play, the carved wooden ceiling of a room played an important part in the story. On the Shakespearean stage there was no proscenium and no curtain to "go up" —though there were curtains for other purposes. There was a projecting platform upon which there was no possibility of illusion. The difference between a platform and a stage is important, because plays are written to fit the current conditions of the theatre. On the modern picture stage you have the illusion of natural action and conversation—you get artistic conviction from the very "naturalness" of the properties; on the old platform stage

you could have no such illusion, and had to get artistic conviction from oratory—the rhetorical heightening of a situation. On the picture stage the characters talk; on the platform stage the characters make speeches. And the actor must never forget that he has to make speeches. He has, in effect, to deliver verse solos. He must, for instance, in *Othello* deliver Shakespeare's "O now for ever Farewell the tranquil mind," as Tamagno used to deliver Verdi's "Ora e per sempre addio sante memorie"—i.e., with full reference to its metre and rhythm. As Mr William Archer admirably says, Shakespeare appears long-winded because actors are short-winded. Opposite is one of several presentments of the Elizabethan stage.

You will observe that it falls into four main divisions—the Front Stage (the platform), the Middle Stage (between the pillars and before the curtain), the Rear Stage (behind the curtain), the Upper Stage (the first story of the erection, so to speak). The two doors are also important. We need not enter into details of description, partly because it is in details that matter for controversy arises, but chiefly because the details are unnecessary for our present purpose, which is to urge that, on a stage of this general construction, a Shakespeare play can be performed with a rapidity, continuity, and rhetorical intensity unknown in the minced, deliberate and protracted performances of the elaborate scenic stage. The Notes will indicate which is a "front stage" scene and which a "full stage" scene in the present play.

(XVIII) CONCLUSION

Much Ado has been a favourite play at all periods, although, as we have said, it is far less rich in the stuff of poetry than such comedies as *Twelfth Night*. Garrick played Benedick with great success to Mrs Pritchard's Beatrice. The most striking modern performance was that at the Lyceum in 1882 and later years when Ellen Terry played Beatrice, Henry Irving Benedick, and Forbes-Robertson Claudio, the Church Scene being a very remarkable piece of elaborate stage-decoration. *Much Ado*



AN ELIZABETHAN STAGE
as imagined by a modern scholar

has proved less attractive than some other Shakespeare plays to musicians. An operatic version by Stanford was given at Covent Garden in 1900 with moderate success. Berlioz composed a setting to a libretto written by himself. It was produced in 1862, but has scarcely survived, though its loveliest moment, the duet between Hero and Ursula—a vocal and orchestral nocturne—is still occasionally heard at concerts.

Let us conclude with two criticisms of the play, the earliest, and one of the latest. The earliest is that by Charles Gildon in Rowe's edition, and here quoted from a reprint of Pope's (1728). The student desirous of getting a good idea of the early eighteenth century attitude to Shakespeare should read Gildon's *Essay on the Art, Rise, and Progress of the Stage, in Greece, Rome, and England*, contained in some of the old editions. This essay contains the "Rules" to which he refers in his later "Remarks." The following passage is taken from the "Remarks" on *Much Ado*:

> This Fable is as full of Absurdities, as the Writing is full of Beauties: The first I leave to the Reader to find out by the Rules I have laid down; the second I shall endeavour to shew, and point out some few of the many that are contain'd in the Play. *Shakespear* indeed had the misfortune, which other of our Poets have since had, of laying his scene in a warm Climate, where the Manners of the People are very different from ours; and yet has made them talk and act generally like Men of a colder Country....
>
> This Play we must call a Comedy, tho some of the Incidents, and Discourses too, are more in a Tragick Strain: and that of the Accusation of *Hero* is too shocking for either Tragedy or Comedy; nor cou'd it have come off in Nature, if we regard the Country, without the Death of more than *Hero*. The Imposition on the Prince and *Claudio* seems very lame, and *Claudio's* Conduct to the Woman he lov'd, highly contrary to the very Nature of Love, to expose her in so barbarous a manner and with so little Concern and Struggle, and on such weak Grounds, without a farther Examination into the matter; yet the Passions this produces in the old Father, make a wonderful amends for the Fault. Besides which, there is such a pleasing Variety of Characters in the Play, and those perfectly maintain'd, as well as distinguish'd, that you lose the Absurdities of the Conduct in the Excellence of the Manners, Sentiments, Diction, and Topicks. *Benedict* and *Beatrice* are two sprightly, witty, talkative

Characters; and tho of the same nature, yet perfectly distinguish'd: and you have no need to read the Names to know who speaks. As they differ from each other, tho so near of kin, so do they from that of *Lucio* in *Measure for Measure*, who is likewise a very talkative Person: but there is a gross Abusiveness, Calumny, Lying, and Lewdness in *Lucio*, which *Benedict* is free from. One is a Rake's Mirth, and Tattle; the other that of a Gentleman, and a Man of Spirit and Wit.

The Stratagem of the Prince on *Benedict* and *Beatrice*, is manag'd with that Nicety and address, that we are very well pleas'd with the Success, and think it very reasonable and just. The Character of Don *John* the Bastard is admirably distinguish'd, his Manners are well mark'd, and everywhere convenient or agreeable. Being of a sour, melancholy, saturnine, envious, selfish, malicious Temper, Manners necessary to produce the Villanous Events they did; these were productive of the Catastrophe: for he was not a Person brought in to fill up the Number only, because without him the Fable could not have gone on.

To quote all the Comick Excellencies of this Play would be to transcribe three parts of it. For all that passes betwixt *Benedict* and *Beatrice* is admirable. His Discourse against Love and Marriage, in the latter end of the second Act, is very pleasant and witty; as is that which *Beatrice* says of *Wooing*, *Wedding* and *Repenting*. And the Aversion that the Poet gives *Benedict* and *Beatrice* for each other in their Discourse, heightens the Jest of making them in love with one another. Nay, the Variety and natural Distinction of the vulgar Humours of this Play, are remarkable.

The Scenes of this Play are something obscure; for you can scarce tell where the Place is in the two first Acts, tho the Scenes in them seem pretty entire, and unbroken. But those are things that we ought not to look much for in *Shakespear*. Yet whilst he is out in the Dramatick Imitation of the Fable, he always draws Men and Women so perfectly, that when we read, we can scarce persuade ourselves but that the Discourse is real and no Fiction.

One of the latest criticisms is that by John Masefield, himself a poet and dramatist. It may help us to answer the question why the play is called *Much Ado about Nothing*:

In this play Shakespeare writes of the power of report, of the thing overheard, to alter human destiny. Antonio's man listening behind a hedge, overhears Don Pedro telling Claudio

that he will woo Hero. The report of his eavesdropping conveys no notion of the truth, and leads, no doubt, to a bitter moment for Hero. Borachio, hiding behind the arras, overhears the truth of the matter. The report of his eavesdropping leads to the casting off of Hero at the altar. Don John and Borachio vow to Claudio that they overheard Don Pedro making love to Hero. The report gives Claudio a bitter moment. Benedick, reporting to the same tune, intensifies his misery.

Benedick, overhearing the report of Beatrice's love for him, changes his mind about marriage. Beatrice, hearing of Benedick's love for her, changes her mind about men. Claudio, hearing Don John's report of Hero, changes his mind about his love. The watch overhearing Borachio's report of his villainy, are able to change the tragedy to comedy. Leonato, hearing Claudio's report of Hero is ready to cast off his child. Report is shown to be stronger than any human affection and any acquired quality, except the love of one unmarried woman for another, and that strongest of all earthly things, the fool in authority. The wisdom of Shakespeare is greater and more various than the brains of little men can imagine. It is one of the tragical things, that this great man, who interpreted the ways of fate in glorious, many-coloured vision, should be set aside in our theatres for the mockers and the accusers, whose vision scatters dust upon the brain and sand upon the empty heart.

Though the play is not one of the most passionate of the plays, it belongs to Shakespeare's greatest creative period. It is full of great and wonderful things. The character-drawing is so abundant and precise that those who know how hard it is to convey the illusion of character can only bow down, thankful that such work may be, but ashamed that it no longer is. Every person in the play is passionately alive about something. The energy of the creative mood in Shakespeare filled all these images with a vitality that interests and compels. The wit and point of the dialogue...is plain to all, but it is given to few to see with what admirable, close, constructive art this dialogue is written for the theatre. Of poetry, of understanding passionately put, there is comparatively little. The one great poetical scene is that at the opening of the fifth act. The worst lines of this scene have become proverbial; the best are

> " 'tis all men's office to speak patience
> To those that wring under the load of sorrow,
> But no man's virtue nor sufficiency,
> To be so moral when he shall endure
> The like himself."

There is little in the play written thus, but there are many

scenes throbbingly alive. The scene in the church shows what power to understand the awakened imagination has. The scene is a quivering eight minutes in as many lives. Shakespeare passes from thrilling soul to thrilling soul with a touch as delicate as it is certain.

Shakespeare's fun is liberally given in the comic scenes. In the last act there is a beautiful example of the effect of lyric to heighten a solemn occasion.

Mr Masefield's interpretation of the play as an exemplification of the power of mere report to change human destiny may be profitably compared with the essay by Dr F. S. Boas, in which the title of the piece is shown to be actually its dramatic theme. To some of Shakespeare's fanciful plays fanciful titles are given; but here the title fits the circumstances. At the end of almost every scene, grave or gay, brief or elaborate, in this play of mingled emotions we can subscribe as a footnote to its tears and entanglements, "Much ado about nothing!"

G. S.

MUCH ADOE ABOUT NOTHING

AS IT HATH BEEN SUNDRIE TIMES PUBLIKELY ACTED BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE, THE LORD CHAMBERLAINE HIS SERUANTS

WRITTEN BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

LONDON
PRINTED BY V. S. FOR ANDREW WISE, AND WILLIAM ASPLEY
1600

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LEONATO, Governor of Messina.
MESSENGER, sent to Leonato.
DON PEDRO, Prince of Arragon, King of Sicily.
DON JOHN, half-brother of Pedro.
BENEDICK, a Lord from Padua.
CLAUDIO, a Lord from Florence.
BALTHASAR, a Lord (with Song).
Old Man (ANTHONY), brother to Leonato.
His Son, muta persona.
CONRAD, a retainer of Don John.
BORACHIO, a retainer of Don John.
A Boy, attendant on Benedick.
DOGBERRY, the Parish Constable.
VERGES, the Headborough.
(Unnamed), the first Watchman.
GEORGE SEACOAL, the second Watchman.
FRANCIS, a Friar.
FRANCIS SEACOAL, Town Clerk and Sexton.
A Lord, companion of Claudio.

HERO, daughter to Leonato.
BEATRICE, niece to Leonato.
MARGARET, attendant to Hero and Beatrice.
URSULA, attendant to Hero and Beatrice.

Place—Messina.
Time—1282–3.

MUCH ADO ABOUT *NOTHING*

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A Garden before* LEONATO'S *House.*

Enter LEONATO *governor of Messina*, INNOGEN *his wife*, HERO *his daughter*, *and* BEATRICE *his niece*, *with a* messenger.

Leon. I learn in this letter, that Don Peter of Arragon comes this night to Messina.

Mess. He is very near by this, he was not three leagues off when I left him.

Leon. How many gentlemen have you lost in this action?

Mess. But few of any sort, and none of name.

Leon. A victory is twice itself, when the achiever brings home full numbers: I find here, that Don Peter hath bestowed much honour on a young Florentine called Claudio.

Mess. Much deserv'd on his part, and equally remembred by Don Pedro, he hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion, he hath indeed better bettred expectation than you must expect of me to tell you how.

Leon. He hath an uncle here in Messina will be very much glad of it.

Mess. I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him, even so much, that joy could not show itself modest enough, without a badge of bitterness.

Leon. Did he break out into tears?

Mess. In great measure.

Leon. A kind overflow of kindness, there are no faces truer than those that are so washt, how much better is it to weep at joy, than to joy at weeping?

Beat. I pray you, is Signior Mountanto return'd from the wars or no?

Mess. I know none of that name, lady, there was none such in the army of any sort.

Leon. What is he that you ask for niece?

Hero. My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua.

Mess. O he's return'd, and as pleasant as ever he was.

Beat. He set up his bills here in Messina, and challeng'd Cupid at the flight, and my uncle's fool reading the challenge subscrib'd for Cupid, and challeng'd him at the burbolt: I pray you, how many hath he kill'd and eaten in these wars? but how many hath he kill'd? for indeed I promised to eat all of his killing.

Leon. Faith niece you tax Signior Benedick too much, but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

Mess. He hath done good service lady in these wars.

Beat. You had musty victual, and he hath holp to eat it, he is a very valiant trencherman, he hath an excellent stomach.

Mess. And a good soldier too, lady.

Beat. And a good soldier to a lady, but what is he to a lord?

Mess. A lord to a lord, a man to a man, stufft with all honourable virtues.

Beat. It is so indeed, he is no less than a stufft man, but for the stuffing well, we are all mortal.

Leon. You must not, sir, mistake my niece, there is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her, they never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them.

Beat. Alas he gets nothing by that, in our last conflict, four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the whole man govern'd with one, so that if he have wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it for a

difference between himself and his horse, for it is all the wealth that he hath left, to be known a reasonable creature, who is his companion now? he hath every month a new sworn brother.

Mess. Is't possible?

Beat. Very easily possible, he wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat, it ever changes with the next block.

Mess. I see lady the gentleman is not in your books.

Beat. No, an he were, I would burn my study, but I pray you who is his companion? is there no young squarer now that will make a voyage with him to the divell?

Mess. He is most in the company of the right noble Claudio.

Beat. O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease, he is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad, God help the noble Claudio, if he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere a be cured.

Mess. I will hold friends with you lady.

Beat. Do good friend.

Leon. You will never run mad niece.

Beat. No, not till a hot January.

Mess. Don Pedro is approacht.

Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, BALTHASAR, *and* JOHN *the bastard*.

Pedro. Good Signior Leonato, are you come to meet your trouble: the fashion of the world is, to avoid cost, and you encounter it.

Leon. Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your Grace, for trouble being gone, comfort should remain: but when you depart from me, sorrow abides, and happiness takes his leave.

Pedro. You embrace your charge too willingly: I think this is your daughter.

Leon. Her mother hath many times told me so.

Bene. Were you in doubt sir that you askt her?

Leon. Signior Benedick, no, for then were you a child.

Pedro. You have it full Benedick, we may guess by this, what you are, being a man, truly the lady fathers herself: be happy lady, for you are like an honourable father.

Bene. If Signior Leonato be her father, she would not have his head on her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she is.

Beat. I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick, nobody marks you.

Bene. What my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?

Beat. Is it possible Disdain should die, while she hath such meet food to feed it, as Signior Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to Disdain, if you come in her presence.

Bene. Then is courtesy a turncoat, but it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted: and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truly I love none.

Beat. A dear happiness to women, they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor, I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that, I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow, than a man swear he loves me.

Bene. God keep your ladyship still in that mind, so some gentleman or other shall scape a predestinate scratcht face.

Beat. Scratching could not make it worse, an 'twere such a face as yours were.

Bene. Well, you are a rare parrot teacher.

Beat. A bird of my tongue, is better than a beast of yours.

Bene. I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer, but keep your way a God's name, I have done.

Beat. You always end with a jade's trick, I know you of old.

Pedro. That is the sum of all: Leonato, Signior Claudio, and Signior Benedick, my dear friend Leonato, hath invited you all, I tell him we shall stay here, at the least a month, and he heartily prays some occasion may detain us longer, I dare swear he is no hypocrite, but prays from his heart.

Leon. If you swear, my lord, you shall not be forsworn, let me bid you welcome, my lord, being reconciled to the prince your brother: I owe you all duty.

John. I thank you, I am not of many words, but I thank you.

Leon. Please it your Grace lead on?

Pedro. Your hand Leonato, we will go together.

[*Exeunt. Manent Benedick and Claudio*

Claud. Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato?

Bene. I noted her not, but I lookt on her.

Claud. Is she not a modest young lady?

Bene. Do you question me as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgment? or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

Claud. No, I pray thee speak in sober judgment.

Bene. Why yfaith methinks she's too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise, only this commendation I can afford her, that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome, and being no other, but as she is, I do not like her.

Claud. Thou thinkest I am in sport, I pray thee tell me truly how thou lik'st her.

Bene. Would you buy her that you inquire after her?

Claud. Can the world buy such a jewel?

Bene. Yea, and a case to put it into, but speak you this with a sad brow? or do you play the flouting Jack, to tell us Cupid is a good hare-finder, and Vulcan a rare

carpenter: Come, in what key shall a man take you to go in the song?

Claud. In mine eye, she is the sweetest lady that ever I lookt on.

Bene. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter: there's her cousin, an she were not possest with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty, as the first of May doth the last of December: but I hope you have no intent to turn husband, have you?

Claud. I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife.

Bene. Is't come to this? in faith hath not the world one man but he will wear his cap with suspicion? shall I never see a bachelor of three-score again? go to yfaith, an thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it, and sigh away Sundays: look, Don Pedro is returned to seek you.

Enter DON PEDRO.

Pedro. What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to Leonato's?

Bene. I would your Grace would constrain me to tell.

Pedro. I charge thee on thy allegiance.

Bene. You hear, Count Claudio, I can be secret as a dumb man, I would have you think so (but on my allegiance, mark you this, on my allegiance) he is in love, with who? now that is your Grace's part: mark how short his answer is, with Hero Leonato's short daughter.

Claud. If this were so, so were it uttred.

Bene. Like the old tale, my lord, it is not so, nor 'twas not so: but indeed, God forbid it should be so.

Claud. If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it should be otherwise.

Pedro. Amen, if you love her, for the lady is very well worthy.

Claud. You speak this to fetch me in, my lord.

Pedro. By my troth I speak my thought.

Claud. And in faith, my lord, I spoke mine.

Bene. And by my two faiths and troths, my lord, I spoke mine.

Claud. That I love her, I feel.

Pedro. That she is worthy, I know.

Bene. That I neither feel how she should be loved, nor know how she should be worthy, is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me, I will die in it at the stake.

Pedro. Thou wast ever an obstinate heretic in the despite of beauty.

Claud. And never could maintain his part, but in the force of his will.

Bene. That a woman conceived me, I thank her: that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks: but that I will have a rechate winded in my forehead, or hang my bugle in an invisible baldrick, all women shall pardon me: because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none: and the fine is, (for the which I may go the finer,) I will live a bachelor.

Pedro. I shall see thee ere I die, look pale with love.

Bene. With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord, not with love: prove that ever I lose more blood with love than I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen, and hang me up at a door for the sign of blind Cupid.

Pedro. Well, if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.

Bene. If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat, and shoot at me, and he that hits me, let him be clapt on the shoulder, and call'd Adam.

Pedro. Well, as time shall try:
In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke.

Bene. The savage bull may, but if ever the sensible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns, and set them in my forehead, and let me be vildly painted, and in

such great letters as they write, Here is good horse to hire: let them signify under my sign, Here you may see Benedick the married man.

Claud. If this should ever happen, thou wouldst be horn-mad.

Pedro. Nay, if Cupid have not spent all his quiver in Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly.

Bene. I look for an earthquake too then.

Pedro. Well, you will temporize with the hours, in the meantime, good Signior Benedick, repair to Leonato's, commend me to him, and tell him I will not fail him at supper, for indeed he hath made great preparation.

Bene. I have almost matter enough in me for such an embassage, and so I commit you.

Claud. To the tuition of God: from my house if I had it.

Pedro. The sixth of July: your loving friend Benedick.

Bene. Nay mock not, mock not, the body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on neither, ere you flout old ends any further, examine your conscience, and so I leave you. [*Exit*

Claud. My liege, your highness now may do me good.

Pedro. My love is thine to teach, teach it but how,
And thou shalt see how apt it is to learn
Any hard lesson that may do thee good.

Claud. Hath Leonato any son, my lord?

Pedro. No child but Hero, she's his only heir:
Dost thou affect her Claudio?

Claud. O my lord,
When you went onward on this ended action,
I lookt upon her with a soldier's eye,
That lik'd, but had a rougher task in hand,
Than to drive liking to the name of love:
But now I am return'd, and that war-thoughts,
Have left their places vacant: in their rooms,
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,

All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
Saying I lik'd her ere I went to wars.
Pedro. Thou wilt be like a lover presently,
And tire the hearer with a book of words,
If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it,
And I will break with her, and with her father,
And thou shalt have her: was't not to this end,
That thou began'st to twist so fine a story?
Claud. How sweetly you do minister to love,
That know love's grief by his complexion!
But lest my liking might too sudden seem,
I would have salv'd it with a longer treatise.
Pedro. What need the bridge much broader than the flood?
The fairest grant is the necessity:
Look what will serve is fit: 'tis once, thou lovest,
And I will fit thee with the remedy,
I know we shall have revelling to-night,
I will assume thy part in some disguise,
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio,
And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart,
And take her hearing prisoner with the force
And strong encounter of my amorous tale:
Then after to her father will I break,
And the conclusion is, she shall be thine,
In practice let us put it presently. [*Exeunt*

SCENE II. *In* LEONATO'S *House*.

Enter LEONATO *and an old man* (ANTHONY) *brother to* LEONATO.

Leon. How now brother, where is my cousin your son, hath he provided this music?

Ant. He is very busy about it, but brother, I can tell you strange news that you yet dreamt not of.

Leon. Are they good?

Ant. As the event stamps them, but they have a good

cover: they show well outward, the prince and Count Claudio walking in a thick-pleached alley in mine orchard, were thus much overheard by a man of mine: the prince discovered to Claudio that he loved my niece your daughter, and meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance, and if he found her accordant, he meant to take the present time by the top, and instantly break with you of it.

Leon. Hath the fellow any wit that told you this?

Ant. A good sharp fellow, I will send for him, and question him yourself.

Leon. No, no, we will hold it as a dream till it appear itself: but I will acquaint my daughter withal, that she may be the better prepared for an answer, if peradventure this be true: go you and tell her of it: [*enter Musician and others*] cousins, you know what you have to do, O I cry you mercy friend, go you with me and I will use your skill: good cousin have a care this busy time.

[*Exeunt*

SCENE III. *In* LEONATO'S *House*.

Enter SIR JOHN *the bastard, and* CONRAD *his companion.*

Con. What the good-year my lord, why are you thus out of measure sad?

John. There is no measure in the occasion that breeds, therefore the sadness is without limit.

Con. You should hear reason.

John. And when I have heard it, what blessing brings it?

Con. If not a present remedy, at least a patient sufferance.

John. I wonder that thou (being as thou sayst thou art, born under Saturn) goest about to apply a moral medicine, to a mortifying mischief: I cannot hide what I am: I must be sad when I have cause, and smile at no man's jests, eat when I have stomach, and wait for no man's leisure: sleep when I am drowsy, and tend on no

man's business, laugh when I am merry, and claw no man in his humour.

Con. Yea but you must not make the full show of this till you may do it without controlment, you have of late stood out against your brother, and he hath ta'en you newly into his grace, where it is impossible you should take true root, but by the fair weather that you make yourself, it is needful that you frame the season for your own harvest.

John. I had rather be a canker in a hedge, than a rose in his grace, and it better fits my blood to be disdain'd of all, than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any: in this (though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man) it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain, I am trusted with a muzzle, and enfranchis'd with a clog, therefore I have decreed, not to sing in my cage: if I had my mouth I would bite: if I had my liberty I would do my liking: in the mean time, let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me.

Con. Can you make no use of your discontent?

John. I make all use of it, for I use it only, Who comes here? what news Borachio?

Enter BORACHIO.

Bora. I came yonder from a great supper, the prince your brother is royally entertain'd by Leonato, and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

John. Will it serve for any model to build mischief on? what is he for a fool that betroths himself to unquietness?

Bora. Marry it is your brother's right hand.

John. Who, the most exquisite Claudio?

Bora. Even he.

John. A proper squire, and who, and who, which way looks he?

Bora. Marry on Hero the daughter and heir of Leonato.

John. A very forward March-chick, how came you to this?

Bora. Being entertain'd for a perfumer, as I was smoking a musty room, comes me the prince and Claudio, hand in hand in sad conference: I whipt me behind the arras, and there heard it agreed upon, that the prince should woo Hero for himself, and having obtain'd her, give her to Count Claudio.

John. Come, come, let us thither, this may prove food to my displeasure, that young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow: if I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way, you are both sure, and will assist me.

Con. To the death my lord.

John. Let us to the great supper, their cheer is the greater that I am subdued, would the cook were a my mind: shall we go prove what's to be done?

Bora. We'll wait upon your lordship. [*Exeunt*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A Room or the Garden of* LEONATO'S *House.*

Enter LEONATO, *his brother, his wife,* HERO *his daughter, and* BEATRICE *his niece, and a kinsman* (*also* URSULA *and* MARGARET).

Leon. Was not Count John here at supper?

Ant. I saw him not.

Beat. How tartly that gentleman looks, I never can see him but I am heart-burn'd an hour after.

Hero. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Beat. He were an excellent man that were made just in the mid-way between him and Benedick, the one is too like an image and says nothing, and the other too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling.

Leon. Then half Signior Benedick's tongue in Count John's mouth, and half Count John's melancholy in Signior Benedick's face,

Beat. With a good leg and a good foot uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world if a could get her good will.

Leon. By my troth niece thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

Ant. In faith she's too curst.

Beat. Too curst is more than curst, I shall lessen God's sending that way, for it is said, *God sends a curst cow short horns*, but to a cow too curst, he sends none.

Leon. So, by being too curst, God will send you no horns.

Beat. Just, if he send me no husband, for the which blessing I am at him upon my knees every morning and evening: Lord, I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face, I had rather lie in the woollen!

Leon. You may light on a husband that hath no beard.

Beat. What should I do with him, dress him in my apparel and make him my waiting-gentlewoman? he that hath a beard, is more than a youth: and he that hath no beard, is less than a man: and he that is more than a youth, is not for me, and he that is less than a man, I am not for him, therefore I will even take sixpence in earnest of the berrord, and lead his apes into hell.

Leon. Well then, go you into hell.

Beat. No but to the gate, and there will the divell meet me with horns on his head, and say, 'Get you to heaven Beatrice, get you to heaven, here's no place for you maids,' so deliver I up my apes and away to Saint Peter: for the heavens, he shews me where the bachelors sit, and there live we as merry as the day is long.

Ant. Well niece, I trust you will be rul'd by your father.

Beat. Yes faith, it is my cousin's duty to make curtsy and say, 'Father, as it please you:' but yet for all that cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another curtsy, and say, 'Father, as it please me.'

Leon. Well niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

Beat. Not till God make men of some other metal than earth, would it not grieve a woman to be over-master'd with a piece of valiant dust? to make an account of her life to a clod of wayward marl? No uncle, I'll none: Adam's sons are my brethren, and truly I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.

Leon. Daughter, remember what I told you, if the prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

Beat. The fault will be in the music cousin, if you be not wooed in good time: if the prince be too important, tell him there is measure in every thing, and so dance out the answer, for hear me Hero, wooing, wedding, and repenting, is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque-pace: the first suit is hot and hasty like a Scotch jig (and full as fantastical) the wedding mannerly-modest (as a measure) full of state and ancientry, and then comes Repentance, and with his bad legs falls into the cinquepace faster and faster, till he sink into his grave.

Leon. Cousin you apprehend passing shrewdly.

Beat. I have a good eye uncle, I can see a church by daylight.

Leon. The revellers are entring brother, make good room.

Enter PRINCE PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, BALTHASAR, [DON JOHN, *and* BORACHIO.]

Pedro. Lady will you walk about with your friend?

Hero. So, you walk softly, and look sweetly, and say nothing, I am yours for the walk, and especially when I walk away.

Pedro. With me in your company.

Hero. I may say so when I please.

Pedro. And when please you to say so?

Hero. When I like your favour, for God defend the lute should be like the case.

Pedro. My visor is Philemon's roof, within the house is Jove.

Hero. Why then your visor should be thatcht.

Pedro. Speak low if you speak love.

Balth. Well, I would you did like me.

Marg. So would not I for your own sake, for I have many ill qualities.

Balth. Which is one?

Marg. I say my prayers aloud.

Balth. I love you the better, the hearers may cry Amen.

Marg. God match me with a good dancer.

Balth. Amen.

Marg. And God keep him out of my sight when the dance is done: answer Clerk.

Balth. No more words, the Clerk is answered.

Urs. I know you well enough, you are Signior Anthonio.

Ant. At a word I am not.

Urs. I know you by the waggling of your head.

Ant. To tell you true, I counterfeit him.

Urs. You could never do him so ill well, unless you were the very man: here's his dry hand up and down, you are he, you are he.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Urs. Come, come, do you think I do not know you by your excellent wit? can virtue hide itself? go to, mum, you are he, graces will appear, and there's an end.

Beat. Will you not tell me who told you so?

Bene. No, you shall pardon me.

Beat. Nor will you not tell me who you are?

Bene. Not now.

Beat. That I was disdainful, and that I had my good wit out of the 'Hundred Merry Tales': well, this was Signior Benedick that said so.

Bene. What's he?

Beat. I am sure you know him well enough.

Bene. Not I, believe me.

Beat. Did he never make you laugh?

Bene. I pray you what is he?

Beat. Why he is the prince's jester, a very dull fool, only his gift is, in devising impossible slanders, none but libertines delight in him, and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villainy, for he both pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh at him, and beat him: I am sure he is in the fleet, I would he had boarded me.

Bene. When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.

Beat. Do, do, he'll but break a comparison or two on me, which peradventure (not markt, or not laught at) strikes him into melancholy and then there's a partridge wing saved, for the fool will eat no supper that night: we must follow the leaders.

Bene. In every good thing.

Beat. Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at the next turning. [*Dance—exeunt*

JOHN, BORACHIO *and* CLAUDIO *remain.*

John. Sure my brother is amorous on Hero, and hath withdrawn her father to break with him about it: the ladies follow her, and but one visor remains.

Bora. And that is Claudio, I know him by his bearing.

John. Are not you Signior Benedick?

Claud. You know me well, I am he.

John. Signior, you are very near my brother in his love, he is enamour'd on Hero, I pray you dissuade him from her, she is no equal for his birth, you may do the part of an honest man in it.

Claud. How know you he loves her?

John. I heard him swear his affection.

Bora. So did I too, and he swore he would marry her to-night.

John. Come let us to the banquet.

[*Exeunt: Manet Claud.*

Claud. Thus answer I in name of Benedick,
But hear these ill news with the ears of Claudio:
'Tis certain so, the prince woos for himself,
Friendship is constant in all other things,
Save in the office and affairs of love:
Therefore all hearts in love use their own tongues.
Let every eye negotiate for itself,
And trust no agent: for Beauty is a witch,
Against whose charms, faith melteth into blood:
This is an accident of hourly proof,
Which I mistrusted not: farewell therefore Hero.

Enter BENEDICK.

Bene. Count Claudio.

Claud. Yea, the same.

Bene. Come, will you go with me?

Claud. Whither?

Bene. Even to the next willow, about your own business, county: what fashion will you wear the garland of? about your neck, like an usurer's chain? or under your arm, like a lieutenant's scarf? you must wear it one way, for the prince hath got your Hero.

Claud. I wish him joy of her.

Bene. Why that's spoken like an honest drovier, so they sell bullocks: but did you think the prince would have served you thus?

Claud. I pray you leave me.

Bene. Ho now you strike like the blind man, 'twas the boy that stole your meat, and you'll beat the post.

Claud. If it will not be, I'll leave you. [*Exit*

Bene. Alas poor hurt fowl, now will he creep into sedges: but that my lady Beatrice should know me, and not know me: the prince's fool! hah, it may be I go under that title because I am merry: yea but so I am apt to do myself wrong: I am not so reputed, it is the base (though bitter) disposition of Beatrice, that puts the world into

her person, and so gives me out: well, I'll be revenged as I may.

Enter the Prince.

Pedro. Now signior, where's the count, did you see him?

Bene. Troth my lord, I have played the part of Lady Fame, I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren, I told him, and I think I told him true, that your Grace had got the goodwill of this young lady, and I offred him my company to a willow tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or to bind him up a rod, as being worthy to be whipt.

Pedro. To be whipt, what's his fault?

Bene. The flat transgression of a school-boy, who being overjoyed with finding a bird's nest, shews it his companion, and he steals it.

Pedro. Wilt thou make a trust a transgression? the transgression is in the stealer.

Bene. Yet it had not been amiss the rod had been made, and the garland too, for the garland he might have worn himself, and the rod he might have bestowed on you, who (as I take it) have stolne his bird's nest.

Pedro. I will but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner.

Bene. If their singing answer your saying, by my faith you say honestly.

Pedro. The Lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you, the gentleman that danc'd with her, told her she is much wrong'd by you.

Bene. O she misus'd me past the endurance of a block: an oak but with one green leaf on it, would have answered her: my very visor began to assume life, and scold with her: she told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the prince's jester, that I was duller than a great thaw, huddling jest upon jest, with such impossible conveyance upon me, that I stood like a man

at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me: she speaks poniards, and every word stabs: if her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no living near her, she would infect to the north star: I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgrest, she would have made Hercules have turn'd spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too: come, talk not of her, you shall find her the infernal Ate in good apparel, I would to God some scholar would conjure her, for certainly, while she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell as in a sanctuary, and people sin upon purpose, because they would go thither, so indeed all disquiet, horror, and perturbation follows her.

Enter CLAUDIO, BEATRICE, HERO, *and* LEONATO.

Pedro. Look here she comes.

Bene. Will your Grace command me any service to the world's end? I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes that you can devise to send me on: I will fetch you a tooth-picker now from the furthest inch of Asia: bring you the length of Prester John's foot: fetch you a hair off the Great Cham's beard: do you any embassage to the Pigmies, rather than hold three words conference, with this harpy, you have no employment for me?

Pedro. None, but to desire your good company.

Bene. O God sir, here's a dish I love not, I cannot endure my Lady Tongue. [*Exit*

Pedro. Come lady, come, you have lost the heart of Signior Benedick.

Beat. Indeed, my lord, he lent it me awhile, and I gave him use for it, a double heart for a single one, marry once before he won it of me, with false dice, therefore your Grace may well say I have lost it.

Pedro. You have put him down lady, you have put him down.

Beat. So I would not he should do me, my lord, lest

I should prove the mother of fools: I have brought Count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.

Pedro. Why how now count, wherefore are you sad?

Claud. Not sad my lord.

Pedro. How then? sick?

Count. Neither, my lord.

Beat. The count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well: but civil count, civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion.

Pedro. Yfaith lady, I think your blazon to be true, though I'll be sworn, if he be so, his conceit is false: here Claudio, I have wooed in thy name, and fair Hero is won, I have broke with her father, and his good will obtained, name the day of marriage, and God give thee joy.

Leon. Count take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes: his Grace hath made the match, and all grace say Amen to it.

Beat. Speak count, 'tis your cue.

Claud. Silence is the perfectest herald of joy, I were but little happy if I could say, how much? Lady, as you are mine, I am yours, I give away myself for you, and dote upon the exchange.

Beat. Speak cousin, or (if you cannot) stop his mouth with a kiss, and let not him speak neither.

Pedro. In faith lady you have a merry heart.

Beat. Yea my lord I thank it, poor fool it keeps on the windy side of Care, my cousin tells him in his ear that he is in her heart.

Claud. And so she doth cousin.

Beat. Good Lord for alliance: thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sunburnt, I may sit in a corner and cry, *Heigh-ho for a husband*.

Pedro. Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

Beat. I would rather have one of your father's getting: hath your Grace ne'er a brother like you? your father got excellent husbands if a maid could come by them.

Pedro. Will you have me? lady.

Beat. No my lord, unless I might have another for working-days, your Grace is too costly to wear every day: but I beseech your Grace pardon me, I was born to speak all mirth, and no matter.

Pedro. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry, best becomes you, for out of question, you were born in a merry hour.

Beat. No sure my lord, my mother cried, but then there was a star danc'd, and under that was I born, cousins God give you joy.

Leon. Niece, will you look to those things I told you of?

Beat. I cry you mercy uncle, by your Grace's pardon. [*Exit Beatrice*

Pedro. By my troth a pleasant spirited lady.

Leon. There's little of the melancholy element in her my lord, she is never sad, but when she sleeps, and not ever sad then: for I have heard my daughter say, she hath often dreamt of unhappiness, and wak'd herself with laughing.

Pedro. She cannot endure to hear tell of a husband.

Leon. O by no means, she mocks all her wooers out of suit.

Pedro. She were an excellent wife for Benedick.

Leon. O Lord, my lord, if they were but a week married, they would talk themselves mad.

Pedro. Count Claudio, when mean you to go to church?

Claud. To-morrow my lord, Time goes on crutches, till Love have all his rites.

Leon. Not till Monday, my dear son, which is hence a just seven-night, and a time too brief too, to have all things answer my mind.

Pedro. Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing, but I warrant thee Claudio, the time shall not go dully by us, I will in the interim, undertake one of Hercules' labours, which is, to bring Signior Benedick and the

Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection, th'one with th'other, I would fain have it a match, and I doubt not but to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall give you direction.

Leon. My lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten nights' watchings.

Claud. And I my lord.

Pedro. And you too gentle Hero?

Hero. I will do any modest office, my lord, to help my cousin to a good husband.

Pedro. And Benedick is not the unhopefullest husband that I know: thus far can I praise him, he is of a noble strain, of approved valour, and confirm'd honesty, I will teach you how to humour your cousin, that she shall fall in love with Benedick, and I, with your two helps, will so practise on Benedick, that in despite of his quick wit, and his queasy stomach, he shall fall in love with Beatrice: if we can do this, Cupid is no longer an Archer, his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love-gods, go in with me, and I will tell you my drift. [*Exeunt*

SCENE II. *In* LEONATO'S *House.*

Enter JOHN *and* BORACHIO.

John. It is so, the Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

Bora. Yea my lord, but I can cross it.

John. Any bar, any cross, any impediment, will be medcinable to me, I am sick in displeasure to him, and whatsoever comes athwart his affection, ranges evenly with mine, how canst thou cross this marriage?

Bora. Not honestly my lord, but so covertly, that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

John. Show me briefly how.

Bora. I think I told your lordship a year since, how much I am in the favour of Margaret, the waiting-gentlewoman to Hero.

John. I remember.

Bora. I can at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber-window.

John. What life is in that to be the death of this marriage?

Bora. The poison of that lies in you to temper, go you to the prince your brother, spare not to tell him, that he hath wronged his honour in marrying the renowned Claudio, whose estimation do you mightily hold up, to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero.

John. What proof shall I make of that?

Bora. Proof enough, to misuse the prince, to vex Claudio, to undo Hero, and kill Leonato, look you for any other issue?

John. Only to despite them I will endeavour any thing.

Bora. Go then, find me a meet hour, to draw Don Pedro and the Count Claudio alone, tell them that you know that Hero loves me, intend a kind of zeal both to the prince and Claudio (as in love of your brother's honour who hath made this match, and his friend's reputation, who is thus like to be cozen'd with the semblance of a maid) that you have discover'd thus: they will scarcely believe this without trial: offer them instances which shall bear no less likelihood, than to see me at her chamber-window, hear me call Margaret Hero, hear Margaret term me Claudio, and bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding, for in the meantime, I will so fashion the matter, that Hero shall be absent, and there shall appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty, that jealousy shall be call'd assurance, and all the preparation overthrown.

John. Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put it in practice: be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

Bora. Be you constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

John. I will presently go learn their day of marriage.

[*Exeunt*

Scene III. *The Garden.*

Enter Benedick *alone.*

Bene. Boy.

(*Enter* Boy.)

Boy. Signior.

Bene. In my chamber-window lies a book, bring it hither to me in the orchard.

Boy. I am here already sir.

Bene. I know that, but I would have thee hence and here again. [*Exit Boy.*] I do much wonder, that one man seeing how much another man is a fool, when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will after he hath laught at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn, by falling in love, and such a man is Claudio, I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife, and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe: I have known when he would have walkt ten mile afoot, to see a good armour, and now will he lie ten nights awake carving the fashion of a new doublet: he was wont to speak plain, and to the purpose (like an honest man and a soldier) and now is he turn'd orthography, his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes: may I be so converted and see with these eyes? I cannot tell, I think not: I will not be sworn but love may transform me to an oyster, but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool: one woman is fair, yet I am well: another is wise, yet I am well, another virtuous, yet I am well: but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace: rich she shall be that's certain, wise, or I'll none, virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her: fair, or I'll never look on her, mild, or come not near me, noble, or not I for an angel, of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God. Hah! the prince and Monsieur Love, I will hide me in the arbour.

Enter Prince, LEONATO, CLAUDIO, *Music*.

Pedro. Come shall we hear this music?

Claud. Yea my good lord: how still the evening is,
As husht on purpose to grace harmony!

Pedro. See you where Benedick hath hid himself?

Claud. O very well my lord: the music ended,
We'll fit the hid-fox with a penny-worth.

Enter BALTHASAR *with music*.

Pedro. Come Balthasar, we'll hear that song again.

Balth. O good my lord, tax not so bad a voice,
To slander music any more than once.

Pedro. It is the witness still of excellency,
To put a strange face on his own perfection,
I pray thee sing, and let me woo no more.

Balth. Because you talk of wooing I will sing,
Since many a wooer doth commence his suit,
To her he thinks not worthy, yet he woos,
Yet will he swear he loves.

Pedro. Nay pray thee come,
Or if thou wilt hold longer argument,
Do it in notes.

Balth. Note this before my notes,
There's not a note of mine that's worth the noting.

Pedro. Why these are very crotchets that he speaks,
Note notes forsooth, and nothing.

Bene. Now divine air, now is his soul ravisht, is it not strange that sheeps' guts should hale souls out of men's bodies? well a horn for my money when all's done.

The Song.

Sigh no more ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever,
One foot in sea, and one on shore,
To one thing constant never,

Then sigh not so,
But let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe,
Into hey nonny nonny.

Sing no more ditties, sing no moe,
Of dumps so dull and heavy,
The fraud of men was ever so,
Since summer first was leavy,
Then sigh not so, &c.

Pedro. By my troth a good song.

Balth. And an ill singer my lord.

Pedro. Ha, no no faith, thou singst well enough for a shift.

Bene. An he had bin a dog that should have howl'd thus, they would have hang'd him, and I pray God his bad voice bode no mischief, I had as lief have heard the night-raven, come what plague could have come after it.

Pedro. Yea marry, dost thou hear Balthasar? I pray thee get us some excellent music: for to-morrow night we would have it at the Lady Hero's chamber-window.

Balth. The best I can my lord. [*Exit Balthasar*

Pedro. Do so, farewell. Come hither Leonato, what was it you told me of to-day, that your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick?

Claud. O ay, stalk on, stalk on, the fowl sits. I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

Leon. No nor I neither, but most wonderful, that she should so dote on Signior Benedick, whom she hath in all outward behaviours seem'd ever to abhor.

Bene. Is't possible? sits the wind in that corner?

Leon. By my troth my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it, but that she loves him with an enraged affection, it is past the infinite of thought.

Pedro. May be she doth but counterfeit.

Claud. Faith like enough.

Leon. O God! counterfeit? there was never counterfeit of passion, came so near the life of passion as she discovers it.

Pedro. Why what effects of passion shews she?

Claud. Bait the hook well, this fish will bite.

Leon. What effects my lord? she will sit you, you heard my daughter tell you how.

Claud. She did indeed.

Pedro. How, how I pray you! you amaze me, I would have thought her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

Leon. I would have sworn it had, my lord, especially against Benedick.

Bene. I should think this a gull, but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it: knavery cannot sure hide himself in such reverence.

Claud. He hath ta'en th'infection, hold it up.

Pedro. Hath she made her affection known to Benedick?

Leon. No, and swears she never will, that's her torment.

Claud. 'Tis true indeed, so your daughter says: Shall I, says she, that have so oft encountred him with scorn, write to him that I love him?

Leon. This says she now when she is beginning to write to him, for she'll be up twenty times a night, and there will she sit in her smock till she have writ a sheet of paper: my daughter tells us all.

Claud. Now you talk of a sheet of paper, I remember a pretty jest your daughter told us of.

Leon. O when she had writ it, and was reading it over, she found Benedick and Beatrice between the sheet.

Claud. That.

Leon. O she tore the letter into a thousand halfpence, rail'd at herself, that she should be so immodest to write, to one that she knew would flout her, 'I measure him,'

says she, 'by my own spirit, for I should flout him, if he writ to me, yea though I love him I should.'

Claud. Then down upon her knees she falls, weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, curses, O sweet Benedick, God give me patience.

Leon. She doth indeed, my daughter says so, and the ecstasy hath so much overborne her, that my daughter is sometime afeard she will do a desperate outrage to herself, it is very true.

Pedro. It were good that Benedick knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it.

Claud. To what end: he would but make a sport of it, and torment the poor lady worse.

Pedro. An he should, it were an alms to hang him, she's an excellent sweet lady, and (out of all suspicion,) she is virtuous.

Claud. And she is exceeding wise.

Pedro. In everything but in loving Benedick.

Leon. O my lord, wisdom and blood combating in so tender a body, we have ten proofs to one, that blood hath the victory, I am sorry for her, as I have just cause, being her uncle, and her guardian.

Pedro. I would she had bestowed this dotage on me, I would have dafft all other respects, and made her half myself: I pray you tell Benedick of it, and hear what a will say.

Leon. Were it good think you?

Claud. Hero thinks surely she will die, for she says she will die, if he love her not, and she will die ere she make her love known, and she will die if he woo her, rather than she will bate one breath of her accustomed crossness.

Pedro. She doth well, if she should make tender of her love, 'tis very possible he'll scorn it, for the man (as you know all) hath a contemptible spirit.

Claud. He is a very proper man.

Pedro. He hath indeed a good outward happiness.

Claud. Before God, and in my mind, very wise.

Pedro. He doth indeed show some sparks that are like wit.

Leon. And I take him to be valiant.

Pedro. As Hector, I assure you, and in the managing of quarrels you may say he is wise, for either he avoids them with great discretion, or undertakes them with a most Christian-like fear.

Leon. If he do fear God, a must necessarily keep peace, if he break the peace, he ought to enter into a quarrel with fear and trembling.

Pedro. And so will he do, for the man doth fear God, howsoever it seems not in him, by some large jests he will make: well I am sorry for your niece, shall we go seek Benedick, and tell him of her love?

Claud. Never tell him, my lord, let her wear it out with good counsel.

Leon. Nay that's impossible, she may wear her heart out first.

Pedro. Well, we will hear further of it by your daughter, let it cool the while. I love Benedick well, and I could wish he would modestly examine himself, to see how much he is unworthy so good a lady.

Leon. My lord, will you walk? dinner is ready.

Claud. If he do not dote on her upon this, I will never trust my expectation.

Pedro. Let there be the same net spread for her, and that must your daughter and her gentlewoman carry: the sport will be, when they hold one an opinion of another's dotage, and no such matter, that's the scene that I would see, which will be merely a dumb-shew: let us send her to call him in to dinner. [*Exeunt*

Bene. This can be no trick, the conference was sadly borne, they have the truth of this from Hero, they seem to pity the lady: it seems her affections have their full bent: love me? why it must be requited; I hear how I am censur'd, they say I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive

the love come from her: they say too, that she will rather die than give any sign of affection: I did never think to marry, I must not seem proud, happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending: they say the lady is fair, 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness: and virtuous, 'tis so, I cannot reprove it, and wise, but for loving me, by my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her, I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage: but doth not the appetite alter? a man loves the meat in his youth, that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences, and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour? No, the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married, here comes Beatrice: by this day, she's a fair lady, I do spy some marks of love in her.

Enter BEATRICE.

Beat. Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

Bene. Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

Beat. I took no more pains for those thanks, than you take pains to thank me, if it had bin painful I would not have come.

Bene. You take pleasure then in the message.

Beat. Yea just so much as you may take upon a knife's point, and choke a daw withal: you have no stomach signior, fare you well. [*Exit*

Bene. Ha, 'Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner': there's a double meaning in that: 'I took no more pains for those thanks than you took pains to thank me,' that's as much as to say, Any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks: if I do not take pity of her I am a villain, if I do not love her I am a Jew, I will go get her picture. [*Exit*

ACT III.

Scene I. *The Garden.*

Enter Hero *and two* Gentlewomen, Margaret *and* Ursley.

Hero. Good Margaret run thee to the parlour,
There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice,
Proposing with the prince and Claudio,
Whisper her ear, and tell her, I and Ursley,
Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse
Is all of her, say that thou overheardst us,
And bid her steal into the pleached bower
Where honey-suckles ripened by the sun,
Forbid the sun to enter: like favourites,
Made proud by princes, that advance their pride,
Against that power that bred it, there will she hide her,
To listen our propose, this is thy office,
Bear thee well in it, and leave us alone.

Marg. I'll make her come I warrant you presently. [*Exit*

Hero. Now Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,
As we do trace this alley up and down,
Our talk must only be of Benedick,
When I do name him let it be thy part,
To praise him more than ever man did merit,
My talk to thee must be how Benedick,
Is sick in love with Beatrice: of this matter,
Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made,
That only wounds by hearsay: now begin,
For look where Beatrice like a lapwing runs
Close by the ground, to hear our conference.

Enter Beatrice.

Urs. The pleasantst angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,
And greedily devour the treacherous bait:

So angle we for Beatrice, who even now,
Is couched in the woodbine coverture,
Fear you not my part of the dialogue.
Hero. Then go we near her that her ear lose nothing,
Of the false sweet bait that we lay for it:
No truly Ursula, she is too disdainful,
I know her spirits are as coy and wild,
As haggerds of the rock.
Urs. But are you sure,
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?
Hero. So says the prince, and my new-trothed lord.
Urs. And did they bid you tell her of it, madam?
Hero. They did entreat me to acquaint her of it,
But I persuaded them, if they lov'd Benedick,
To wish him wrastle with affection,
And never to let Beatrice know of it.
Urs. Why did you so, doth not the gentleman
Deserve as full as fortunate a bed,
As ever Beatrice shall couch upon?
Hero. O god of love! I know he doth deserve,
As much as may be yielded to a man:
But nature never fram'd a woman's heart,
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice:
Disdain and Scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprising what they look on, and her wit
Values itself so highly, that to her
All matter else seems weak: she cannot love,
Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
She is so self-endeared.
Urs. Sure I think so,
And therefore certainly it were not good,
She knew his love lest she'll make sport at it.
Hero. Why you speak truth, I never yet saw man,
How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featured,
But she would spell him backward: if fair-faced,
She would swear the gentleman should be her sister;
If black, why Nature drawing of an antic,

Made a foul blot: if tall, a lance ill-headed:
If low, an agot very vildly cut:
If speaking, why a vane blown with all winds:
If silent, why a block moved with none:
So turns she every man the wrong side out,
And never gives to Truth and Virtue, that
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth.
Urs. Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.
Hero. No not to be so odd, and from all fashions,
As Beatrice is, cannot be commendable,
But who dare tell her so? If I should speak,
She would mock me into air, O she would laugh me
Out of myself, press me to death with wit,
Therefore let Benedick like cover'd fire,
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly:
It were a better death, than die with mocks,
Which is as bad as die with tickling.
Urs. Yet tell her of it, hear what she will say.
Hero. No rather I will go to Benedick,
And counsel him to fight against his passion,
And truly I'll devise some honest slanders,
To stain my cousin with, one doth not know,
How much an ill word may impoison liking.
Urs. O do not do your cousin such a wrong,
She cannot be so much without true judgment,
Having so swift and excellent a wit,
As she is pris'd to have, as to refuse
So rare a gentleman as Signior Benedick.
Hero. He is the only man of Italy,
Always excepted my dear Claudio.
Urs. I pray you be not angry with me, madam,
Speaking my fancy: Signior Benedick,
For shape, for bearing, argument and valour,
Goes foremost in report through Italy.
Hero. Indeed he hath an excellent good name.
Urs. His excellence did earn it, ere he had it:
When are you married madam?

Hero. Why every day to-morrow, come go in,
I'll shew thee some attires, and have thy counsel,
Which is the best to furnish me to-morrow.

Urs. She's limed I warrant you, we have caught her madam.

Hero. If it prove so, then loving goes by haps,
Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.
[*Exeunt*

Beat. What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?
Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?
Contempt, farewell, and maiden pride, adieu,
No glory lives behind the back of such.
And Benedick, love on, I will requite thee,
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand:
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee
To bind our loves up in a holy band.
For others say thou dost deserve, and I
Believe it better than reportingly. [*Exit*

SCENE II. *In* LEONATO'S *House.*

Enter Prince, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, *and* LEONATO.

Pedro. I do but stay till your marriage be consummate, and then go I toward Arragon.

Claud. I'll bring you thither my lord, if you'll vouchsafe me.

Pedro. Nay that would be as great a soil in the new gloss of your marriage, as to shew a child his new coat and forbid him to wear it, I will only be bold with Benedick for his company, for from the crown of his head, to the sole of his foot, he is all mirth, he hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string, and the little hangman dare not shoot at him, he hath a heart as sound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper, for what his heart thinks, his tongue speaks.

Bene. Gallants, I am not as I have bin.

Leon. So say I, methinks you are sadder.

Claud. I hope he be in love.

Pedro. Hang him truant, there's no true drop of blood in him to be truly toucht with love, if he be sad, he wants money.

Bene. I have the tooth-ache.

Pedro. Draw it.

Bene. Hang it.

Claud. You must hang it first, and draw it afterwards.

Pedro. What? sigh for the tooth-ache.

Leon. Where is but a humour or a worm.

Bene. Well, every one cannot master a grief, but he that has it.

Claud. Yet say I, he is in love.

Pedro. There is no appearance of fancy in him, unless it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises, as to be a Dutchman to-day, a Frenchman to-morrow, or in the shape of two countries at once, as a German from the waist downward, all slops, and a Spaniard from the hip upward, no doublet: unless he have a fancy to this foolery, as it appears he hath, he is no fool for fancy, as you would have it appear he is.

Claud. If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs, a brushes his hat a mornings, what should that bode?

Pedro. Hath any man seen him at the barber's?

Claud. No, but the barber's man hath bin seen with him, and the old ornament of his cheek hath already stufft tennis-balls.

Leon. Indeed he looks younger than he did, by the loss of a beard.

Pedro. Nay a rubs himself with civet, can you smell him out by that?

Claud. That's as much as to say, the sweet youth's in love.

Pedro. The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

Claud. And when was he wont to wash his face?

Pedro. Yea or to paint himself? for the which I hear what they say of him.

Claud. Nay but his jesting spirit, which is now crept into a lute-string, and now govern'd by stops.

Pedro. Indeed that tells a heavy tale for him: conclude, conclude, he is in love.

Claud. Nay but I know who loves him.

Pedro. That would I know too, I warrant, one that knows him not.

Claud. Yes, and his ill conditions, and in despite of all, dies for him.

Pedro. She shall be buried with her face upwards.

Bene. Yet is this no charm for the tooth-ache. Old signior, walk aside with me, I have studied eight or nine wise words to speak to you, which these hobby-horses must not hear. [*Exeunt Benedick and Leonato*

Pedro. For my life to break with him about Beatrice.

Claud. 'Tis even so, Hero and Margaret have by this played their parts with Beatrice, and then the two bears will not bite one another when they meet.

Enter JOHN the Bastard.

John. My lord and brother, God save you.

Pedro. Good den brother.

John. If your leisure serv'd, I would speak with you.

Pedro. In private?

John. If it please you, yet Count Claudio may hear, for what I would speak of, concerns him.

Pedro. What's the matter?

John. Means your lordship to be married to-morrow?

Pedro. You know he does.

John. I know not that when he knows what I know.

Claud. If there be any impediment, I pray you discover it.

John. You may think I love you not, let that appear hereafter, and aim better at me by that I now will manifest, for my brother (I think, he holds you well, and in

dearness of heart) hath holp to effect your ensuing marriage: surely suit ill spent, and labour ill bestowed.

Pedro. Why what's the matter?

John. I came hither to tell you, and circumstances shortned (for she hath bin too long a talking of) the lady is disloyal.

Claud. Who Hero?

John. Even she, Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero.

Claud. Disloyal?

John. The word is too good to paint out her wickedness, I could say she were worse, think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it: wonder not till further warrant: go but with me to-night, you shall see her chamber-window entred, even the night before her wedding-day, if you love her, then to-morrow wed her: but it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

Claud. May this be so?

Pedro. I will not think it.

John. If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you know: if you will follow me, I will shew you enough, and when you have seen more, and heard more, proceed accordingly.

Claud. If I see any thing to-night, why I should not marry her to-morrow in the congregation, where I should wed, there will I shame her.

Pedro. And as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee, to disgrace her.

John. I will disparage her no further, till you are my witnesses, bear it coldly but till midnight, and let the issue shew itself.

Pedro. O day untowardly turned!

Claud. O mischief strangely thwarting!

John. O plague right well prevented! So will you say, when you have seen the sequel. [*Exeunt*

SCENE III. *A Street or Square.*

Enter DOGBERRY *and his compartner with the Watch.*

Dogb. Are you good men and true?

Verg. Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation body and soul.

Dogb. Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they should have any allegiance in them, being chosen for the prince's watch.

Verg. Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogbery.

Dogb. First, who think you the most desartless man to be constable?

Watch 1. Hugh Oatcake sir, or George Seacoal, for they can write and read.

Dogb. Come hither neighbour Seacoal. God hath blest you with a good name: to be a well-favoured man, is the gift of Fortune, but to write and read, comes by nature.

Watch 2. Both which, master Constable

Dogb. You have: I knew it would be your answer: well, for your favour sir, why give God thanks, and make no boast of it, and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity, you are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the Constable of the watch: therefore bear you the lantern: this is your charge, You shall comprehend all vagrom men, you are to bid any man stand, in the Prince's name.

Watch 2. How if a will not stand?

Dogb. Why then take no note of him, but let him go, and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thank God you are rid of a knave.

Verg. If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the prince's subjects.

Dogb. True, and they are to meddle with none but the prince's subjects: you shall also make no noise in the

streets: for, for the watch to babble and to talk, is most tolerable, and not to be endured.

Watch. We will rather sleep than talk, we know what belongs to a watch.

Dogb. Why you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman, for I cannot see how sleeping should offend: only have a care that your bills be not stolne: well, you are to call at all the alehouses, and bid those that are drunk get them to bed.

Watch. How if they will not?

Dogb. Why then let them alone till they are sober, if they make you not then the better answer, you may say, they are not the men you took them for.

Watch. Well sir.

Dogb. If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man: and for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why the more is for your honesty.

Watch. If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him?

Dogb. Truly by your office you may, but I think they that touch pitch will be defil'd: the most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is, to let him shew himself what he is, and steal out of your company.

Verg. You have been always called a merciful man, partner.

Dogb. Truly I would not hang a dog by my will, much more a man who hath any honesty in him.

Verg. If you hear a child cry in the night you must call to the nurse and bid her still it.

Watch. How if the nurse be asleep and will not hear us?

Dogb. Why then depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying, for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes, will never answer a calf when he bleats.

Verg. 'Tis very true.

Dogb. This is the end of the charge: you constable are to present the prince's own person, if you meet the prince in the night, you may stay him.

Verg. Nay birlady that I think a cannot.

Dogb. Five shillings to one on't with any man that knows the statutes, he may stay him, marry not without the prince be willing, for indeed the watch ought to offend no man, and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

Verg. Birlady I think it be so.

Dogb. Ha ah ha, well masters good night, an there be any matter of weight chances, call up me, keep your fellows' counsels, and your own, and good night, come neighbour.

Watch. Well masters, we hear our charge, let us go sit here upon the church-bench till two, and then all to bed.

Dogb. One word more, honest neighbours, I pray you watch about Signior Leonato's door, for the wedding being there to-morrow, there is a great coil to-night, adieu, be vigitant I beseech you.

[*Exeunt Dogbery and Verges*

Enter BORACHIO *and* CONRAD.

Bora. What Conrad?

Watch. Peace, stir not.

Bora. Conrad I say.

Con. Here man, I am at thy elbow.

Bora. Mass and my elbow itcht, I thought there would a scab follow.

Con. I will owe thee an answer for that, and now forward with thy tale.

Bora. Stand thee close then under this pent-house, for it drizzles rain, and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.

Watch. Some treason masters, yet stand close.

Bora. Therefore know, I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats.

Con. Is it possible that any villainy should be so dear?

Bora. Thou shouldst rather ask if it were possible any villainy should be so rich? for when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

Con. I wonder at it.

Bora. That shews thou art unconfirm'd, thou knowest that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.

Con. Yes it is apparel.

Bora. I mean the fashion.

Con. Yes the fashion is the fashion.

Bora. Tush, I may as well say the fool's the fool, but seest thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is?

Watch. I know that Deformed, a has bin a vile thief, this seven year, a goes up and down like a gentleman: I remember his name.

Bora. Didst thou not hear somebody?

Con. No, 'twas the vane on the house.

Bora. Seest thou not (I say) what a deformed thief this fashion is, how giddily a turns about all the hot bloods, between fourteen and five-and-thirty, sometimes fashioning them like Pharaoh's soldiers in the reechy painting, sometime like god Bel's priests in the old church-window, sometime like the shaven Hercules in the smircht worm-eaten tapestry.

Con. All this I see, and I see that the fashion wears out more apparel than the man, but art not thou thyself giddy with the fashion too, that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion?

Bora. Not so neither, but know that I have to-night wooed Margaret the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero, she leans me out at her mistress' chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night: I tell this tale vildly, I should first tell thee how the prince Claudio and my master planted, and placed, and possessed, by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

Con. And thought they Margaret was Hero?

Bora. Two of them did, the prince and Claudio, but the divell my master knew she was Margaret, and partly by his oaths, which first possest them, partly by the dark night which did deceive them, but chiefly, by my villainy, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enrag'd, swore he would meet her as he was appointed next morning at the Temple, and there, before the whole congregation shame her, with what he saw o'er night, and send her home again without a husband.

Watch 1. We charge you in the prince's name stand.

Watch 2. Call up the right master Constable, we have here recover'd the most dangerous piece of lechery, that ever was known in the commonwealth.

Watch 1. And one Deformed is one of them, I know him, a wears a lock.

Con. Masters, masters.

Watch 2. You'll be made bring Deformed forth I warrant you.

Con. Masters.

Watch 1. Never speak, we charge you, let us obey you to go with us.

Bora. We are like to prove a goodly commodity, being taken up of these men's bills.

Con. A commodity in question, I warrant you, come we'll obey you. [*Exeunt*

SCENE IV. HERO'S *Room.*

Enter HERO, *and* MARGARET, *and* URSULA.

Hero. Good Ursula wake my cousin Beatrice, and desire her to rise.

Urs. I will lady.

Hero. And bid her come hither.

Urs. Well. [*Exit*

Marg. Troth I think your other rebato were better.

Hero. No pray thee good Meg, I'll wear this.

Marg. By my troth's not so good, and I warrant your cousin will say so.

Hero. My cousin's a fool, and thou art another, I'll wear none but this.

Marg. I like the new tire within excellently, if the hair were a thought browner: and your gown's a most rare fashion yfaith, I saw the Duchess of Millaine's gown that they praise so.

Hero. O that exceeds they say.

Marg. By my troth's but a night-gown in respect of yours, cloth a gold and cuts, and lac'd with silver, set with pearls, down sleeves, side sleeves, and skirts, round underborne with a bluish tinsel, but for a fine quaint graceful and excellent fashion, yours is worth ten on't.

Hero. God give me joy to wear it, for my heart is exceeding heavy...

Enter BEATRICE.

Hero. Good morrow coz.

Beat. Good morrow sweet Hero.

Hero. Why how now? do you speak in the sick tune?

Beat. I am out of all other tune, methinks.

Marg. Clap's into 'Light o' love,' (that goes without a burden,) do you sing it, and I'll dance it...

Beat. 'Tis almost five a clock cousin, 'tis time you were ready. By my troth I am exceeding ill, hey ho.

Marg. For a hawk, a horse, or a husband?

Beat. For the letter that begins them all, H.

Marg. Well, an you be not turn'd Turk, there's no more sailing by the star.

Beat. What means the fool trow?

Marg. Nothing I, but God send every one their heart's desire.

Hero. These gloves the count sent me, they are an excellent perfume.

Beat. I am stufft cousin, I cannot smell.

Marg. A maid and stufft! there's goodly catching of cold.

Beat. O God help me, God help me, how long have you professt apprehension?

Marg. Ever since you left it, doth not my wit become me rarely?

Beat. It is not seen enough, you should wear it in your cap, by my troth I am sick.

Marg. Get you some of this distill'd *carduus benedictus*, and lay it to your heart, it is the only thing for a qualm.

Hero. There thou prickst her with a thistle.

Beat. *Benedictus*, why *benedictus*? you have some moral in this *benedictus*.

Marg. Moral? no by my troth I have no moral meaning, I meant plain holy thistle, you may think perchance that I think you are in love nay birlady I am not such a fool to think what I list, nor I list not to think what I can, nor indeed I cannot think, if I would think my heart out of thinking, that you are in love, or that you will be in love, or that you can be in love: yet Benedick was such another and now is he become a man, he swore he would never marry, and yet now in despite of his heart he eats his meat without grudging, and how you may be converted I know not, but methinks you look with your eyes as other women do.

Beat. What pace is this that thy tongue keeps?

Marg. Not a false gallop.

Enter URSULA.

Urs. Madam withdraw, the prince, the count, Signior Benedick, Don John, and all the gallants of the town are come to fetch you to church.

Hero. Help to dress me good coz, good Meg, good Ursula.

SCENE V. *In* LEONATO'S *House.*

Enter LEONATO, *and the* Constable, *and the* Headborough.

Leon. What would you with me, honest neighbour?

Dogb. Marry sir I would have some confidence with you, that decerns you nearly.

Leon. Brief I pray you, for you see it is a busy time with me.

Dogb. Marry this it is sir.

Verg. Yes in truth it is sir.

Leon. What is it my good friends?

Dogb. Goodman Verges sir speaks a little off the matter, an old man sir, and his wits are not so blunt, as God help I would desire they were, but in faith honest, as the skin between his brows.

Verg. Yes I thank God, I am as honest as any man living, that is an old man, and no honester than I.

Dogb. Comparisons are odorous, palabras, neighbour Verges.

Leon. Neighbours, you are tedious.

Dogb. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor duke's officers, but truly for mine own part if I were as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all of your worship.

Leon. All thy tediousness on me, ah?

Dogb. Yea, an 'twere a thousand pound more than 'tis, for I hear as good exclamation on your worship as of any man in the city, and though I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it.

Verg. And so am I.

Leon. I would fain know what you have to say.

Verg. Marry sir our watch to-night, excepting your worship's presence, ha' ta'en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.

Dogb. A good old man sir, he will be talking as they say, when the age is in, the wit is out, God help us, it is a world to see: well said yfaith neighbour Verges, well,

God's a good man, an two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind, an honest soul yfaith sir, by my troth he is, as ever broke bread, but God is to be worshipt, all men are not alike, alas good neighbour.

Leon. Indeed neighbour he comes too short of you.

Dogb. Gifts that God gives.

Leon. I must leave you.

Dogb. One word sir, our watch sir have indeed comprehended two aspitious persons, and we would have them this morning examined before your worship.

Leon. Take their examination yourself, and bring it me, I am now in great haste, as it may appear unto you.

Dogb. It shall be suffigance.

Leon. Drink some wine ere you go: fare you well.

A Messenger (*entering*). My lord, they stay for you, to give your daughter to her husband.

Leon. I'll wait upon them, I am ready. [*Exeunt*

Dogb. Go good partner, go get you to Francis Seacoal, bid him bring his pen and inkhorn to the gaol: we are now to examination these men.

Verg. And we must do it wisely.

Dogb. We will spare for no wit I warrant you: here's that shall drive some of them to a non-come, only get the learned writer to set down our excommunication, and meet me at the gaol.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A Church.*

Enter Prince, Bastard, LEONATO, Friar, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, HERO, *and* BEATRICE.

Leon. Come Friar Francis, be brief, only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

Friar. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady.

Claud. No.

Leon. To be married to her: Friar, you come to marry her.

Friar. Lady, you come hither to be married to this count.

Hero. I do.

Friar. If either of you know any inward impediment why you should not be conjoined, I charge you on your souls to utter it.

Claud. Know you any, Hero?

Hero. None my lord.

Friar. Know you any, count?

Leon I dare make his answer, None.

Claud. O! what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do, not knowing what they do!

Bene. How now! Interjections? Why then, some be of laughing, as, ah, ha, he.

Claud. Stand thee by Friar, father, by your leave,
Will you with free and unconstrained soul
Give me this maid your daughter?

Leon. As freely son as God did give her me.

Claud. And what have I to give you back whose worth
May counterpoise this rich and precious gift?

Pedro. Nothing, unless you render her again.

Claud. Sweet prince, you learn me noble thankfulness:
There Leonato, take her back again,
Give not this rotten orange to your friend,
She's but the sign and semblance of her honour:
Behold how like a maid she blushes here!
O what authority and shew of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal!
Comes not that blood, as modest evidence,
To witness simple Virtue? would you not swear,
All you that see her, that she were a maid,
By these exterior shews? But she is none:
She knows the heat of a luxurious bed:
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

Leon. What do you mean, my lord?
Claud. Not to be married,
Not to knit my soul to an approved wanton.
Leon. Dear my lord, if you in your own proof,
Have vanquisht the resistance of her youth,
And made defeat of her virginity,
Claud. I know what you would say: if I have known her,
You will say, she did embrace me as a husband,
And so extenuate the 'forehand sin: No Leonato,
I never tempted her with word too large,
But as a brother to his sister, shewed
Bashful sincerity and comely love.
Hero. And seem'd I ever otherwise to you?
Claud. Out on thee seeming, I will write against it,
You seem to me as Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown:
But you are more intemperate in your blood,
Than Venus, or those pampred animals,
That rage in savage sensuality.
Hero. Is my lord well that he doth speak so wide?
Leon. Sweet prince, why speak not you?
Pedro. What should I speak?
I stand dishonour'd that have gone about,
To link my dear friend to a common stale.
Leon. Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?
John. Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.
Bene. This looks not like a nuptial.
Hero. True, O God!
Claud. Leonato, stand I here?
Is this the prince? Is this the prince's brother?
Is this face Hero's? are our eyes our own?
Leon. All this is so, but what of this my lord?
Claud. Let me but move one question to your daughter,
And by that fatherly and kindly power,
That you have in her, bid her answer truly.
Leon. I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.
Hero. O God defend me how am I beset,

What kind of catechizing call you this?
Claud. To make you answer truly to your name.
Hero. Is it not Hero, who can blot that name
With any just reproach?
Claud. Marry that can Hero,
Hero itself can blot out Hero's virtue.
What man was he talkt with you yesternight,
Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?
Now if you are a maid, answer to this.
Hero. I talkt with no man at that hour my lord.
Pedro. Why then are you no maiden. Leonato,
I am sorry you must hear: upon mine honour,
Myself, my brother, and this grieved count
Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night,
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber-window,
Who hath indeed most like a liberal villain,
Confest the vile encounters they have had
A thousand times in secret.
John. Fie, fie, they are not to be named my lord,
Not to be spoke of,
There is not chastity enough in language,
Without offence to utter them: thus pretty lady,
I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.
Claud. O Hero! what a Hero hadst thou bin,
If half thy outward graces had bin placed,
About thy thoughts and counsels of thy heart?
But fare thee well, most foul, most fair, farewell
Thou pure impiety, and impious purity,
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of Love,
And on my eyelids shall Conjecture hang,
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,
And never shall it more be gracious.
Leon. Hath no man's dagger here a point for me.
Beat. Why how now cousin, wherefore sink you down?
John. Come let us go: these things come thus to light,
Smother her spirits up.
[*Exeunt Don Pedro, Don John and Claudio*

Bene. How doth the lady?
Beat. Dead I think, help uncle,
Hero, why Hero, Uncle, Signior Benedick, Friar,
Leon. O Fate! take not away thy heavy hand,
Death is the fairest cover for her shame
That may be wisht for.
Beat. How now cousin Hero?
Friar. Have comfort lady.
Leon. Dost thou look up?
Friar. Yea, wherefore should she not?
Leon. Wherefore! Why doth not every earthly thing
Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny
The story that is printed in her blood?
Do not live Hero, do not ope thine eyes:
For did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,
Myself would on the rearward of reproaches
Strike at thy life. Grieved I I had but one?
Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame?
O one too much by thee: why had I one?
Why ever wast thou lovely in mine eyes?
Why had I not with charitable hand,
Took up a beggar's issue at my gates,
Who smirched thus, and mired with infamy,
I might have said, 'No part of it is mine,
This shame derives itself from unknown loins,'
But mine, and mine I loved, and mine I prais'd,
And mine that I was proud on, mine so much,
That I myself, was to myself not mine:
Valuing of her, why she, O she is falne
Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea
Hath drops too few to wash her clean again,
And salt too little, which may season give
To her foul tainted flesh.
Bene. Sir, sir, be patient.
For my part I am so attired in wonder,

I know not what to say.
Beat. O on my soul my cousin is belied.
Bene. Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?
Beat. No truly, not although until last night,
I have this twelvemonth bin her bedfellow.
Leon. Confirm'd, confirm'd, O that is stronger made,
Which was before barr'd up with ribs of iron,
Would the two princes lie, and Claudio lie,
Who lov'd her so, that speaking of her foulness,
Washt it with tears! Hence from her, let her die.
Friar. Hear me a little,
For I have only bin silent so long,
And given way unto this course of fortune,
By noting of the lady, I have markt,
A thousand blushing apparitions,
To start into her face, a thousand innocent shames,
In angel whiteness beat away those blushes,
And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire,
To burn the errors that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth: call me a fool,
Trust not my reading, nor my observations,
Which with experimental seal doth warrant
The tenour of my book: trust not my age,
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here,
Under some biting error.
Leon. Friar, it cannot be,
Thou seest that all the grace that she hath left,
Is, that she will not add to her damnation,
A sin of perjury, she not denies it:
Why seekst thou then to cover with excuse,
That which appears in proper nakedness?
Friar. Lady, what man is he you are accus'd of?
Hero. They know that do accuse me, I know none,
If I know more of any man alive
Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
Let all my sins lack mercy, O my father,

Prove you that any man with me converst,
At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight
Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,
Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death.

Friar. There is some strange misprision in the princes.

Bene. Two of them have the very bent of honour,
And if their wisdoms be misled in this,
The practice of it lives in John the bastard,
Whose spirits toil in frame of villanies.

Leon. I know not, if they speak but truth of her,
These hands shall tear her, if they wrong her honour,
The proudest of them shall well hear of it.
Time hath not yet so dried this blood of mine,
Nor age so eat up my invention,
Nor Fortune made such havoc of my means,
Nor my bad life reft me so much of friends,
But they shall find awak'd in such a kind,
Both strength of limb, and policy of mind,
Ability in means, and choice of friends,
To quit me of them throughly.

Friar. Pause awhile,
And let my counsel sway you in this case,
Your daughter here the princess (left for dead,)
Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
And publish it, that she is dead indeed,
Maintain a mourning ostentation,
And on your family's old monument,
Hang mournful epitaphs, and do all rites,
That appertain unto a burial.

Leon. What shall become of this? what will this do?

Friar. Marry this well carried, shall on her behalf,
Change slander to remorse, that is some good,
But not for that dream I on this strange course,
But on this travail look for greater birth:
She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,
Upon the instant that she was accus'd,
Shall be lamented, pitied, and excus'd

Of every hearer: for it so falls out,
That what we have, we prize not to the worth,
Whiles we enjoy it, but being lackt and lost,
Why, then we rack the value, then we find
The virtue that possession would not shew us
Whiles it was ours, so will it fare with Claudio:
When he shall hear she died upon his words,
Th'Idaea of her life shall sweetly creep,
Into his study of imagination,
And every lovely organ of her life,
Shall come apparell'd in more precious habit,
More moving delicate, and full of life,
Into the eye and prospect of his soul
Than when she liv'd indeed: then shall he mourn,
If ever love had interest in his liver,
And wish he had not so accused her:
No, though he thought his accusation true:
Let this be so, and doubt not but success
Will fashion the event in better shape,
Than I can lay it down in likelihood.
But if all aim but this be levell'd false,
The supposition of the lady's death,
Will quench the wonder of her infamy.
And if it sort not well, you may conceal her,
As best befits her wounded reputation,
In some reclusive and religious life,
Out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries.

Bene. Signior Leonato, let the Friar advise you,
And though you know my inwardness and love
Is very much unto the prince and Claudio,
Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this,
As secretly and justly as your soul
Should with your body.

Leon. Being that I flow in grief,
The smallest twine may lead me.

Friar. 'Tis well consented, presently away,
For to strange sores, strangely they strain the cure,

Come lady, die to live, this wedding day
Perhaps is but prolong'd, have patience and endure.

[*Exit with Leonato and Hero*

Bene. Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

Beat. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Bene. I will not desire that.

Beat. You have no reason, I do it freely.

Bene. Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.

Beat. Ah, how much might the man deserve of me that would right her!

Bene. Is there any way to shew such friendship?

Beat. A very even way, but no such friend.

Bene. May a man do it?

Beat. It is a man's office, but not yours.

Bene. I do love nothing in the world so well as you, is not that strange?

Beat. As strange as the thing I know not, it were as possible for me to say, I loved nothing so well as you, but believe me not, and yet I lie not, I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing, I am sorry for my cousin.

Bene. By my sword Beatrice, thou lovest me.

Beat. Do not swear and eat it.

Bene. I will swear by it that you love me, and I will make him eat it that says I love not you.

Beat. Will you not eat your word?

Bene. With no sauce that can be devised to it, I protest I love thee.

Beat. Why then God forgive me.

Bene. What offence sweet Beatrice?

Beat. You have stayed me in a happy hour, I was about to protest I loved you.

Bene. And do it with all thy heart.

Beat. I love you with so much of my heart, that none is left to protest.

Bene. Come bid me do anything for thee.

Beat. Kill Claudio.

Bene. Ha, not for the wide world.

Beat. You kill me to deny it, farewell.

Bene. Tarry sweet Beatrice.

Beat. I am gone, though I am here, there is no love in you, nay I pray you let me go.

Bene. Beatrice.

Beat. In faith I will go.

Bene. We'll be friends first.

Beat. You dare easier be friends with me, than fight with mine enemy.

Bene. Is Claudio thine enemy?

Beat. Is a not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? O that I were a man! what, bear her in hand, until they come to take hands, and then with public accusation, uncover'd slander, unmitigated rancour? O God that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place.

Bene. Hear me Beatrice.

Beat. Talk with a man out at a window, a proper saying.

Bene. Nay but Beatrice.

Beat. Sweet Hero, she is wrong'd, she is slandred, she is undone.

Bene. Beat—

Beat. Princes and counties! Surely a princely testimony, a goodly Count, Count Comfect, a sweet gallant surely, O that I were a man for his sake! or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into curtsies, valour into compliment, and men are only turn'd into tongue, and trim ones too: he is now as valiant as Hercules, that only tells a lie, and swears it. I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

Bene. Tarry good Beatrice, by this hand I love thee.

Beat. Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.

Bene. Think you in your soul the Count Claudio hath wrong'd Hero?

Beat. Yea, as sure as I have a thought, or a soul.

Bene. Enough, I am engag'd, I will challenge him, I will kiss your hand, and so I leave you: by this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account: as you hear of me, so think of me: go comfort your cousin, I must say she is dead, and so farewell. [*Exeunt*

SCENE II. *The* Constable's *Room.*

Enter the Constables *and the* Town Clerk *in gowns, with the* Watch, CONRAD *and* BORACHIO.

Dogb. Is our whole dissembly appear'd?

Verg. O a stool and a cushion for the Sexton.

Sexton. Which be the malefactors?

Dogb. Marry that am I, and my partner.

Verg. Nay that's certain, we have the exhibition to examine.

Sexton. But which are the offenders, that are to be examined? let them come before master Constable.

Dogb. Yea marry, let them come before me, what is your name, friend?

Bora. Borachio.

Dogb. Pray write down Borachio. Yours sirrah.

Con. I am a gentleman sir, and my name is Conrad.

Dogb. Write down Master gentleman Conrad: masters, do you serve God?

Both. Yea sir we hope.

Dogb. Write down, that they hope they serve God: and write God first, for God defend but God should go before such villains: masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves, and it will go near to be thought so shortly, how answer you for yourselves?

Con. Marry sir we say, we are none.

Dogb. A marvellous witty fellow I assure you, but I will go about with him: come you hither sirrah, a word in your ear sir, I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves.

Bora. Sir, I say to you, we are none.

Dogb. Well, stand aside, fore God, they are both in a tale: have you writ down, that they are none?

Sexton. Master constable, you go not the way to examine, you must call forth the watch that are their accusers.

Dogb. Yea marry, that's the eftest way, let the watch come forth: masters, I charge you in the prince's name accuse these men.

Watch 1. This man said sir, that Don John the prince's brother was a villain.

Dogb. Write down, Prince John a villain: why this is flat perjury, to call a prince's brother villain.

Bora. Master constable.

Dogb. Pray thee fellow peace, I do not like thy look I promise thee.

Sexton. What heard you him say else?

Watch 2. Marry that he had received a thousand ducats of Don John, for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.

Dogb. Flat burglary as ever was committed.

Verg. Yea by mass that it is.

Sexton. What else fellow?

Watch 1. And that Count Claudio did mean upon his words, to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly, and not marry her.

Dogb. O villain! thou wilt be condemn'd into everlasting redemption for this.

Sexton. What else?

Watch 1. This is all.

Sexton. And this is more masters than you can deny, Prince John is this morning secretly stolne away: Hero was in this manner accus'd, in this very manner refus'd, and upon the grief of this suddenly died: Master constable, let these men be bound, and brought to Leonato's, I will go before and shew him their examination. [*Exit*

Dogb. Come let them be opinion'd.

Verg. Let them be, in the hands.

Con. Off coxcomb.

Dogb. God's my life, where's the Sexton? let him write down the prince's officer Coxcomb: come, bind them: thou naughty varlet.

Con. Away, you are an ass, you are an ass.

Dogb. Dost thou not suspect my place? dost thou not suspect my years? O that he were here to write me down an ass! but masters, remember that I am an ass, though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass: No thou villain, thou art full of piety as shall be prov'd upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow, and which is more, an officer, and which is more, a householder, and which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina, and one that knows the Law, go to, and a rich fellow enough, go to, and a fellow that hath had losses, and one that hath two gowns, and everything handsome about him: bring him away: O that I had bin writ down an ass! [*Exeunt*

ACT V.

SCENE I. *A Street or Square.*

Enter LEONATO *and his brother.*

Ant. If you go on thus, you will kill yourself,
And 'tis not wisdom thus to second grief,
Against yourself.

Leon. I pray thee cease thy counsel,
Which falls into mine ears as profitless,
As water in a sieve: give not me counsel,
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear,
But such a one whose wrongs do suit with mine.
Bring me a father that so lov'd his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine,
And bid him speak of patience,
Measure his woe the length and breadth of mine,

And let it answer every strain for strain,
As thus for thus, and such a grief for such,
In every lineament, branch, shape, and form:
If such a one will smile and stroke his beard,
And sorrow, wag, cry 'hem,' when he should groan,
Patch grief with proverbs, make misfortune drunk,
With candle-wasters: bring him yet to me,
And I of him will gather patience:
But there is no such man, for brother, men
Can counsel and speak comfort to that grief,
Which they themselves not feel, but tasting it,
Their counsel turns to passion, which before,
Would give preceptial medicine to rage,
Fetter strong madness in a silken thread,
Charm ache with air, and agony with words,
No, no, 'tis all men's office, to speak patience
To those that wring under the load of sorrow,
But no man's virtue nor sufficiency
To be so moral, when he shall endure
The like himself: therefore give me no counsel,
My griefs cry louder than advertisement.

Ant. Therein do men from children nothing differ.

Leon. I pray thee peace, I will be flesh and blood,
For there was never yet philosopher,
That could endure the toothache patiently,
However they have writ the style of gods,
And made a push at chance and sufferance.

Ant. Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself,
Make those that do offend you, suffer too.

Leon. There thou speakst reason, nay I will do so,
My soul doth tell me, Hero is belied,
And that shall Claudio know, so shall the prince,
And all of them that thus dishonour her.

Enter Prince *and* CLAUDIO.

Ant. Here comes the prince and Claudio hastily.
Pedro. Good den, good den.
Claud. Good day to both of you.
Leon. Hear you my lords?
Pedro. We have some haste Leonato.
Leon. Some haste my lord! well, fare you well my lord,
Are you so hasty now? well, all is one.
Pedro. Nay do not quarrel with us, good old man.
Ant. If he could right himself with quarrelling,
Some of us would lie low.
Claud. Who wrongs him?
Leon. Marry thou dost wrong me, thou dissembler, thou:
Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword,
I fear thee not.
Claud. Marry beshrew my hand,
If it should give your age such cause of fear,
In faith my hand meant nothing to my sword.
Leon. Tush, tush man, never fleer and jest at me,
I speak not like a dotard, nor a fool,
As under privilege of age to brag,
What I have done being young, or what would do,
Were I not old, know Claudio to thy head,
Thou hast so wrong'd mine innocent child and me,
That I am forct to lay my reverence by,
And with grey hairs and bruise of many days,
Do challenge thee to trial of a man,
I say thou hast belied mine innocent child.
Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
And she lies buried with her ancestors:
O in a tomb where never scandal slept,
Save this of hers, fram'd by thy villany.
Claud. My villany?
Leon. Thine Claudio, thine I say.
Pedro. You say not right old man.

Leon. My lord, my lord,
I'll prove it on his body if he dare,
Despite his nice fence, and his active practice,
His May of youth, and bloom of lustihood.
Claud. Away, I will not have to do with you.
Leon. Canst thou so daff me? Thou hast kill'd my child,
If thou killst me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.
Ant. He shall kill two of us, and men indeed,
But that's no matter, let him kill one first:
"Win me and wear me," let him answer me,
Come follow me boy, come sir boy, come follow me
Sir boy, I'll whip you from your foining fence,
Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.
Leon. Brother.
Ant. Content yourself, God knows, I loved my niece,
And she is dead, slander'd to death by villains,
That dare as well answer a man indeed,
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue.
Boys, apes, braggarts, Jacks, milksops.
Leon. Brother Anthony.
Ant. Hold you content, what man! I know them, yea
And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple,
Scambling, out-facing, fashion-monging boys,
That lie, and cog, and flout, deprave, and slander,
Go anticly, and shew outward hideousness,
And speak off half a dozen dang'rous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst,
And this is all.
Leon. But brother Anthony.
Ant. Come 'tis no matter,
Do not you meddle, let me deal in this.
Pedro. Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience,
My heart is sorry for your daughter's death:
But on my honour she was charg'd with nothing
But what was true, and very full of proof.
Leon. My lord, my lord.

Pedro. I will not hear you.

Leon. No come brother, away, I will be heard.

Ant. And shall, or some of us will smart for it.

[*Exeunt Leonato and Antonio*

Enter BENEDICK.

Pedro. See see, here comes the man we went to seek.

Claud. Now signior, what news?

Bene. Good day my lord:

Pedro. Welcome signior, you are almost come to part almost a fray.

Claud. We had lik'd to have had our two noses snapt off with two old men without teeth.

Pedro. Leonato and his brother, what thinkst thou? had we fought, I doubt we should have been too young for them.

Bene. In a false quarrel there is no true valour, I came to seek you both.

Claud. We have been up and down to seek thee, for we are high-proof melancholy, and would fain have it beaten away, wilt thou use thy wit?

Bene. It is in my scabbard, shall I draw it?

Pedro. Dost thou wear thy wit by thy side?

Claud. Never any did so, though very many have been beside their wit, I will bid thee draw, as we do the minstrels, draw to pleasure us.

Pedro. As I am an honest man he looks pale, art thou sick, or angry?

Claud. What courage man: what though care kill'd a cat, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

Bene. Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career, an you charge it against me, I pray you choose another subject.

Claud. Nay then give him another staff, this last was broke cross.

Pedro. By this light he changes more and more, I think he be angry indeed.

Claud. If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.

Bene. Shall I speak a word in your ear?

Claud. God bless me from a challenge.

Bene. You are a villain, I jest not, I will make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare: do me right, or I will protest your cowardice: you have kill'd a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you, let me hear from you.

Claud. Well I will meet you, so I may have good cheer.

Pedro. What, a feast, a feast?

Claud. Ay faith I thank him, he hath bid me to a calf's-head and a capon, the which if I do not carve most curiously, say my knife's naught, shall I not find a woodcock too?

Bene. Sir your wit ambles well, it goes easily.

Pedro. I'll tell thee how Beatrice prais'd thy wit the other day: I said thou hadst a fine wit, true said she, a fine little one: no said I, a great wit: right says she, a great gross one: nay said I, a good wit: just said she, it hurts nobody: nay said I, the gentleman is wise: certain said she, a wise gentleman: nay said I, he hath the tongues: that I believe said she, for he swore a thing to me on Monday night, which he forswore on Tuesday morning, there's a double tongue, there's two tongues, thus did she an hour together trans-shape thy particular virtues, yet at last she concluded with a sigh, thou wast the properst man in Italy.

Claud. For the which she wept heartily and said she cared not.

Pedro. Yea that she did, but yet for all that, an if she did not hate him deadly, she would love him dearly, the old man's daughter told us all.

Claud. All all, and moreover, God saw him when he was hid in the garden.

Pedro. But when shall we set the savage bull's horns on the sensible Benedick's head?

Claud. Yea and text underneath, 'Here dwells Benedick the married man.'

Bene. Fare you well, boy, you know my mind, I will leave you now to your gossip-like humour, you break jests as braggarts do their blades, which God be thanked hurt not: my lord, for your many courtesies I thank you, I must discontinue your company, your brother the bastard is fled from Messina: you have among you, kill'd a sweet and innocent lady: for my Lord Lack-beard there, he and I shall meet, and till then peace be with him. [*Exit*

Pedro. He is in earnest.

Claud. In most profound earnest, and I'll warrant you, for the love of Beatrice.

Pedro. And hath challeng'd thee?

Claud. Most sincerely.

Pedro. What a pretty thing man is, when he goes in his doublet and hose, and leaves off his wit!

Enter Constables, CONRAD *and* BORACHIO.

Claud. He is then a giant to an ape, but then is an ape a doctor to such a man.

Pedro. But soft you, let me be, pluck up my heart, and be sad, did he not say my brother was fled?

Dogb. Come you sir, if justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance, nay, an you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be lookt to.

Pedro. How now, two of my brother's men bound? Borachio one.

Claud. Hearken after their offence my lord.

Pedro. Officers, what offence have these men done?

Dogb. Marry sir, they have committed false report, moreover they have spoken untruths, secondarily they are slanders, sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady, thirdly they have verified unjust things, and to conclude, they are lying knaves.

Pedro. First I ask thee what they have done, thirdly I

ask thee what's their offence, sixth and lastly why they are committed, and to conclude, what you lay to their charge.

Claud. Rightly reasoned, and in his own division, and by my troth there's one meaning well suited.

Pedro. Who have you offended masters, that you are thus bound to your answer? this learned constable is too cunning to be understood, what's your offence?

Bora. Sweet prince, let me go no further to mine answer: do you hear me, and let this count kill me: I have deceived even your very eyes: what your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light, who in the night overheard me confessing to this man, how Don John your brother incensed me to slander the Lady Hero, how you were brought into the orchard, and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments, how you disgrac'd her when you should marry her: my villainy they have upon record, which I had rather seal with my death, than repeat over to my shame: the lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation: and briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

Pedro. Runs not this speech like iron through your blood?

Claud. I have drunk poison whiles he utter'd it.

Pedro. But did my brother set thee on to this?

Bora. Yea, and paid me richly for the practice of it.

Pedro. He is compos'd and fram'd of treachery,
And fled he is upon this villainy.

Claud. Sweet Hero, now thy image doth appear
In the rare semblance that I lov'd it first.

Dogb. Come, bring away the plaintiffs, by this time our sexton hath reformed Signior Leonato of the matter: and masters, do not forget to specify when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass.

Verg. Here, here comes master Signior Leonato, and the sexton too.

Enter LEONATO, *his brother*, *and the* Sexton.

Leon. Which is the villain? let me see his eyes,
That when I note another man like him,
I may avoid him: which of these is he?
Bora. If you would know your wronger, look on me.
Leon. Art thou the slave that with thy breath hast kill'd
Mine innocent child?
Bora. Yea, even I alone.
Leon. No, not so villain, thou beliest thyself,
Here stand a pair of honourable men,
A third is fled that had a hand in it:
I thank you princes for my daughter's death,
Record it with your high and worthy deeds,
'Twas bravely done, if you bethink you of it.
Claud. I know not how to pray your patience,
Yet I must speak, choose your revenge yourself,
Impose me to what penance your invention
Can lay upon my sin, yet sinn'd I not,
But in mistaking.
Pedro. By my soul nor I,
And yet to satisfy this good old man,
I would bend under any heavy weight,
That he'll enjoin me to.
Leon. I cannot bid you bid my daughter live,
That were impossible, but I pray you both,
Possess the people in Messina here,
How innocent she died, and if your love
Can labour aught in sad invention,
Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb,
And sing it to her bones, sing it to-night:
To-morrow morning come you to my house,
And since you could not be my son-in-law,
Be yet my nephew: my brother hath a daughter,
Almost the copy of my child that's dead,
And she alone is heir to both of us,

Give her the right you should have giv'n her cousin,
And so dies my revenge.

Claud. O noble sir!
Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me,
I do embrace your offer and dispose,
For henceforth of poor Claudio.

Leon. To-morrow then I will expect your coming,
To-night I take my leave, this naughty man
Shall face to face be brought to Margaret,
Who I believe was packt in all this wrong,
Hired to it by your brother.

Bora. No by my soul she was not,
Nor knew not what she did when she spoke to me,
But always hath bin just and virtuous,
In anything that I do know by her.

Dogb. Moreover sir, which indeed is not under white and black, this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me ass, I beseech you let it be remembred in his punishment, and also the watch heard them talk of one Deformed, they say he wears a key in his ear and a lock hanging by it, and borrows money in God's name, the which he hath us'd so long, and never paid, that now men grow hard-hearted, and will lend nothing for God's sake: pray you, examine him upon that point.

Leon. I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

Dogb. Your worship speaks like a most thankful and reverend youth, and I praise God for you.

Leon. There's for thy pains.

Dogb. God save the foundation.

Leon. Go, I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I thank thee.

Dogb. I leave an arrant knave with your worship, which I beseech your worship to correct yourself, for the example of others: God keep your worship, I wish your worship well, God restore you to health, I humbly give you leave to depart, and if a merry meeting may be wisht, God prohibit it: come neighbour.

Leon. Until to-morrow morning, lords, farewell.
Ant. Farewell my lords, we look for you to-morrow.
Pedro. We will not fail.
Claud. To-night I'll mourn with Hero.
Leon. Bring you these fellows on. We'll talk with Margaret,
How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow.
[*Exeunt*

SCENE II. *The Garden.*

Enter BENEDICK *and* MARGARET.

Bene. Pray thee sweet Mistress Margaret, deserve well at my hands, by helping me to the speech of Beatrice.

Marg. Will you then write me a sonnet in praise of my beauty?

Bene. In so high a style Margaret, that no man living shall come over it, for in most comely truth thou deservest it.

Marg. To have no man come over me, why shall I always keep below stairs.

Bene. Thy wit is as quick as the greyhound's mouth, it catches.

Marg. And yours, as blunt as the fencer's foils, which hit, but hurt not.

Bene. A most manly wit Margaret, it will not hurt a woman: and so I pray thee call Beatrice, I give thee the bucklers.

Marg. Give us the swords, we have bucklers of our own.

Bene. If you use them Margaret, you must put in the pikes with a vice, and they are dangerous weapons for maids.

Marg. Well, I will call Beatrice to you, who I think hath legs. [*Exit Margaret*

Bene. And therefore will come.

The god of love
That sits above,
And knows me, and knows me,
How pitiful I deserve.

I mean in singing, but in loving, Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of pandars, and a whole book full of these quondam carpet-mongers, whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse, why they were never so truly turn'd over and over as my poor self in love: marry I cannot shew it in rime, I have tried, I can find out no rime to 'lady' but 'baby,' an innocent rime: for 'scorn,' 'horn,' a hard rime: for 'school,' 'fool,' a babbling rime: very ominous endings, no, I was not born under a riming planet, nor I cannot woo in festival terms.

Enter BEATRICE.

Sweet Beatrice, wouldst thou come when I call'd thee?

Beat. Yea signior, and depart when you bid me.

Bene. O stay but till then.

Beat. 'Then,' is spoken: fare you well now, and yet ere I go, let me go with that I came, which is, with knowing what hath past between you and Claudio.

Bene. Only foul words, and thereupon I will kiss thee.

Beat. Foul words is but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome, therefore I will depart unkist.

Bene. Thou hast frighted the word out of his right sense, so forcible is thy wit, but I must tell thee plainly, Claudio undergoes my challenge, and either I must shortly hear from him, or I will subscribe him a coward, and I pray thee now tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me?

Beat. For them all together, which maintain'd so politic a state of evil, that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them: but for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me?

Bene. Suffer love! a good epithet, I do suffer love indeed, for I love thee against my will.

Beat. In spite of your heart I think, alas poor heart, if you spite it for my sake, I will spite it for yours, for I will never love that which my friend hates.

Bene. Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.

Beat. It appears not in this confession, there's not one wise man among twenty that will praise himself.

Bene. An old, an old instance, Beatrice, that liv'd in the time of good neighbours, if a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monument, than the bell rings, and the widow weeps.

Beat. And how long is that think you?

Bene. Question, why an hour in clamour and a quarter in rheum, therefore is it most expedient for the wise, if Don Worm (his conscience) find no impediment to the contrary, to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself so much for praising myself, who I myself will bear witness is praiseworthy, and now tell me, how doth your cousin?

Beat. Very ill.

Bene. And how do you?

Beat. Very ill too.

Bene. Serve God, love me, and mend, there will I leave you too, for here comes one in haste.

Enter URSULA.

Urs. Madam, you must come to your uncle, yonder's old coil at home, it is proved my Lady Hero hath bin falsely accus'd, the prince and Claudio mightily abus'd, and Don John is the author of all, who is fled and gone: will you come presently?

Beat. Will you go hear this news signior?

Bene. I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eyes: and moreover, I will go with thee to thy uncle's. [*Exeunt*

Scene III. *At* Leonato's *Mausoleum.*

Enter Claudio, Prince, *and three or four with tapers.*

Claud. Is this the monument of Leonato?

Lord. It is my lord.

Epitaph.

Done to death by slanderous tongues,
Was the Hero that here lies:
Death in guerdon of her wrongs,
Gives her fame which never dies:
So the life that died with shame,
Lives in death with glorious fame.
Hang thou there upon the tomb,
Praising her when I am dumb.

Claud. Now music sound and sing your solemn hymn.

Song.

Pardon goddess of the night,
Those that slew thy virgin knight,
For the which with songs of woe,
Round about her tomb they go:
Midnight assist our moan,
Help us to sigh and groan.
Heavily heavily.
Graves yawn and yield your dead,
Till death be uttered,
Heavily heavily.

Lord. Now unto thy bones good night,
Yearly will I do this rite.

Pedro. Good morrow masters, put your torches out,
The wolves have preyed, and look, the gentle day
Before the wheels of Phœbus, round about
Dapples the drowsy east with spots of grey:
Thanks to you all, and leave us, fare you well.

Claud. Good morrow masters, each his several way.

Pedro. Come let us hence, and put on other weeds,
And then to Leonato's we will go.
Claud. And Hymen now with luckier issue speeds,
Than this for whom we rendred up this woe.
[*Exeunt*

SCENE IV. *In* LEONATO'S *House.*

Enter LEONATO, BENEDICK, MARGARET, URSULA, Old man, Friar *and* HERO.

Friar. Did I not tell you she was innocent?
Leon. So are the prince and Claudio who accus'd her,
Upon the error that you heard debated:
But Margaret was in some fault for this,
Although against her will as it appears,
In the true course of all the question.
Ant. Well, I am glad that all things sorts so well.
Bene. And so am I, being else by faith enforct
To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.
Leon. Well daughter, and you gentlewomen all,
Withdraw into a chamber by yourselves,
And when I send for you come hither masked:
The prince and Claudio promis'd by this hour
To visit me, you know your office brother,
You must be father to your brother's daughter,
And give her to young Claudio. [*Exeunt ladies*
Ant. Which I will do with confirm'd countenance.
Bene. Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.
Friar. To do what signior?
Bene. To bind me, or undo me, one of them:
Signior Leonato, truth it is good signior,
Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.
Leon. That eye my daughter lent her, 'tis most true.
Bene. And I do with an eye of love requite her.
Leon. The sight whereof I think you had from me,
From Claudio and the prince, but what's your will?
Bene. Your answer sir is enigmatical,

But for my will, my will is, your good will
May stand with ours, this day to be conjoin'd,
In the state of honourable marriage,
In which (good Friar) I shall desire your help.

Leon. My heart is with your liking.

Friar. And my help.
Here comes the prince and Claudio.

Enter Prince *and* CLAUDIO, *and two or three other.*

Pedro. Good morrow to this fair assembly.

Leon. Good morrow prince, good morrow Claudio:
We here attend you, are you yet determined
To-day to marry with my brother's daughter?

Claud. I'll hold my mind were she an Ethiope.

Leon. Call her forth brother, here's the Friar ready.
[*Exit Anthony*

Pedro. Good morrow Benedick, why what's the matter?
That you have such a February face,
So full of frost, of storm and cloudiness.

Claud. I think he thinks upon the savage bull:
Tush fear not man, we'll tip thy horns with gold,
And all Europa shall rejoice at thee,
As once Europa did at lusty Jove,
When he would play the noble beast in love.

Bene. Bull Jove sir had an amiable low,
And some such strange bull leapt your father's cow,
And got a calf in that same noble feat,
Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.

Enter Brother, HERO, BEATRICE, MARGARET, URSULA.

Claud. For this I owe you: here come other recknings.
Which is the lady I must seize upon?

Leon. This same is she, and I do give you her.

Claud. Why then she's mine, sweet, let me see your face.

Leon. No that you shall not till you take her hand,
Before this Friar, and swear to marry her.

Claud. Give me your hand before this holy Friar,
I am your husband if you like of me.
Hero. And when I liv'd I was your other wife,
And when you loved, you were my other husband.
Claud. Another Hero.
Hero. Nothing certainer.
One Hero died defil'd, but I do live,
And surely as I live, I am a maid.
Pedro. The former Hero, Hero that is dead.
Leon. She died my Lord, but whiles her slander liv'd.
Friar. All this amazement can I qualify,
When after that the holy rites are ended,
I'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death,
Meantime let wonder seem familiar,
And to the chapel let us presently.
Bene. Soft and fair Friar, which is Beatrice?
Beat. I answer to that name, what is your will?
Bene. Do not you love me?
Beat. Why no, no more than reason.
Bene. Why then your uncle, and the prince, and Claudio,
Have been deceived, they swore you did.
Beat. Do not you love me?
Bene. Troth no, no more than reason.
Beat. Why then my cousin Margaret and Ursula,
Are much deceiv'd, for they did swear you did.
Bene. They swore that you were almost sick for me.
Beat. They swore that you were well-nigh dead for me.
Bene. 'Tis no such matter, then you do not love me.
Beat. No truly, but in friendly recompense.
Leon. Come cousin, I am sure you love the gentleman.
Claud. And I'll be sworn upon't, that he loves her,
For here's a paper written in his hand,
A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,
Fashioned to Beatrice.

Hero. And here's another,
Writ in my cousin's hand, stolne from her pocket,
Containing her affection unto Benedick.

Bene. A miracle, here's our own hands against our hearts: come, I will have thee, but by this light I take thee for pity.

Beat. I would not deny you, but by this good day, I yield upon great persuasion, and partly to save your life, for I was told, you were in a consumption.

Leon. Peace I will stop your mouth.

Pedro. How dost thou Benedick the married man?

Bene. I'll tell thee what prince: a college of witcrackers cannot flout me out of my humour, dost thou think I care for a satire or an epigram? no, if a man will be beaten with brains, a shall wear nothing handsome about him: in brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it, and therefore never flout at me, for what I have said against it: for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion: for thy part Claudio, I did think to have beaten thee, but in that thou art like to be my kinsman, live unbruis'd, and love my cousin.

Claud. I had well hop'd thou wouldst have denied Beatrice, that I might have cudgell'd thee out of thy single life, to make thee a double-dealer, which out of question thou wilt be, if my cousin do not look exceeding narrowly to thee.

Bene. Come, come, we are friends, let's have a dance ere we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts, and our wives' heels.

Leon. We'll have dancing afterward.

Bene. First, of my word, therefore play music. Prince, thou art sad, get thee a wife, get thee a wife, there is no staff more reverend than one tipt with horn.

Enter Messenger.

Mes. My Lord, your brother John is ta'en in flight,
And brought with armed men back to Messina.

Bene. Think not on him till to-morrow, I'll devise thee brave punishments for him: strike up Pipers.

[*Dance*

FINIS.

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NOTES

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE. No list is given in Q. or F. The first list was extracted by Rowe, whose form is still frequently followed. The present list collects the names or titles of all the persons who appear on the stage, very nearly in the order of their appearance. Leonato represents the Lionato of Bandello. Benedick (*benedictus*) means "the blessed." Beatrice (four syllables in Italian, and meaning "the blesser") is here pronounced in two, or three, syllables, as the lines require. "Betteris" probably represents the Elizabethan pronunciation. The name Borachio must be pronounced with the *ch* as in *church*—the last syllable being *cho*, not *chee-o*. It represents a possible Italian "Borraccio,"—*accio* being an Italian suffix adding a bad sense: there is an actual Italian word *borraccia*, meaning a drinking vessel and, especially, a soldier's water-bottle. In one scene of the play Borachio is drunk. Shakespeare sometimes tries to write his proper names as they should be pronounced. Thus, "Fluellen" is a very fair attempt at the Welsh "Llewellyn." It is quite wrong, therefore, to say "Borakio" or "Petrukio," as we sometimes hear in stage performances. The *ch* is a rough phonetic equivalent of the Italian *ci*. Dogbery is *dogberry*, the fruit of the dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*). Mr Shandy would have found much significance in the fact that the wood of this plant is hard, untractable, obtuse, and used for making skewers. He would certainly have connected the name Verges with *verge*, a staff of office, though others prefer to connect it with *verjuice*. Its Elizabethan pronunciation was "Varges." Shakespeare spells the name of his famous constable "Dogbery" uniformly throughout Q., and the same form is uniformly used in F. We preserve the same form of spelling in such a name as Rosebery. The original spelling of Dogbery is therefore retained here; but there is no point in retaining the final *e* in "Conrade": we do not now write "Benedicke," although that is the usual Shakespearean spelling. Hero of Messina appears to have nothing in common with Hero of Sestos. The scene of the action is indicated in the play itself, and the date is fixed by the appearance of an historical character, Pedro of Aragon, among the *dramatis personae*; but, as noted in the Introduction, the play has neither local nor temporal colour.

ACT I

Scene I

Page 3

There are no act or scene divisions whatever in Q., and F. has merely divisions into Acts—*Actus Primus*, *Actus Secundus*, etc. The scenic divisions and descriptions usually printed in modern texts were added by Rowe, Pope and succeeding editors. The descriptions given in this volume are those of the present editor. They are purposely left as vague as possible and must be regarded as hints to the reader, certainly not as instructions to the stage-manager. The play begins with a "full-stage" scene, and the time is Monday "night" (according to the second line), by which we may understand a late summer afternoon.

1. *Don Peter*, i.e. Pedro of Aragon, King of Sicily. Both Q. and F. call him "don Peter" here and at l. 9. Elsewhere he is always named "Pedro"; but he is generally called "Prince" in stage-direction and speech-heading. The present text retains the old stage-directions, but the name, not the title, is used uniformly as the speech-headings. Did the name Peter survive from an earlier play?

6. *this action*. There is no need to connect these military references with the adventures of Essex in Ireland. In the story of Bandello the action passes just after the Sicilian Vespers and the subsequent fighting against the French.

7. *sort*, rank or gentle blood; *name*=title. The delicate antithesis at once marks our Messenger as a Euphuist, or fantastical gentleman in his use of words—like Osric in *Hamlet* and Don Armado in *Love's Labour's Lost*. Observe the elaboration of his next speech.

15. *better bettred expectation*: "he has gone beyond expectation in deeds much further than you must expect me to go in words." A characteristic utterance of our "precious" young gentleman.

17. *an uncle*. The only mention of this superfluous relative in the play. No uncle appears in the parallel stories. The allusion may be intended to account for the presence of a Florentine in Messina and his acquaintance with a Sicilian family; but more probably the uncle is a survival from some earlier play.

will be, who will be. The same construction is common in the Irish idiom of Synge; e.g. "I'll have no want of company when all sorts is bringing me their food and clothing, the way they'd set their eyes upon *the gallant orphan cleft his father* with

one blow to the breeches belt" (*The Playboy of the Western World*). The use is not peculiar to Shakespeare or this place. In "The names of the Authors from whome this Historie of England is collected" prefixed to Holinshed appears this reference: "Iean de Bauge a Frenchman wrote a pamphlet of the warres in Scotland during the time that Monsieur de Desse remained there." We should say, "a Frenchman who wrote etc." Later in the present play (IV. 2) we have "as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina." See also *Twelfth Night* (I. 3. 20): "He's as tall a man as any's in Illyria." I think this should be regarded as a distinct idiom, and not simply as an example of an omitted relative.

p. 3. 21. *modest enough*, etc. Furness quotes Douce (*Illustrations of Shakespeare*) to the effect that in the time of Edward IV the terms *badge* and *livery* were synonymous. The badge was a device, usually the master's crest, fastened to the servant's left arm. Thus a badge was a sign of inferior rank. Our young Euphuist therefore means, "His joy was so great that at last it had to prove its state of true modesty by assuming the badge of grief, namely, tears."

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25. *kind...kindness*. The old man catches the trick of Euphuism; "kind" means "natural," "after his *kind*," and is strikingly used in this sense in *The Rape of Lucrece*, in a passage describing a realistic painting of the siege of Troy (ll. 1422–3):

> "For much imaginary work was there,
> Conceit deceitful, so compact, so kind";

Leonato's verbal jugglery with "joy" and "weeping" is quite in the Euphuist's vein. Shakespeare loved these fantasias of words. See for serious examples Hamlet's bitter puns (I. 2. 65, 67).

28. *Signior Mountanto*. Mountanto is a fencing term, an "up thrust"—equivalent to the "upper cut" in boxing. Capell first called attention to the special use of the term, and indicates a parallel in Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* (IV. 7) where Bobadil says, "...and I would teach these nineteene, the speceall rules, as your *Punto*, your *Reverso*, your *Stoccata*, your *Imbroccata*, your *Passada*, your *Montanto*: till they could all play very neare, or altogether as well as my selfe" (1598). See also *Merry Wives*, II. 3. 24, where the Host tells Dr Caius that they have come "To see thee fight, to see thee foigne, to see thee traverse, to see thee here, to see thee there, to see thee pass thy puncto, thy stock, thy reverse, thy distance, thy montant." Observe that Beatrice is the first to mention Benedick. Observe,

too, how much the reference conveys. It tells us that Benedick is already a known person to Leonato's household, that Beatrice is well enough acquainted with his character to give him a nickname, and that she is eager for his return—else why should she instantly ask about him? The expectations of reader and auditor alike are aroused. Shakespeare is almost unmatched in this power of conveying the sense of something beyond the written or spoken word. It is worth notice, as a curious coincidence, that the first words of Beatrice in this play should refer to the swordsmanship of the man to whose sword she was later to appeal.

4. 31. *sort*, see note to l. 7.

35. *set up his bills*. Posted up advertisements. Steevens quotes Nashe, *Have with you to Saffron Walden* (1596): "hee braves it indefinently in her behalfe, setting up bills, like a Bearward or Fencer, what fights we shall have, and what weapons she will meete me at."

36. *challeng'd Cupid at the flight*. Benedick as "the duellist of sex" challenged the god of love to do his worst. A "flight" is alleged to be an arrow for long distance shooting. R. Farmer, *On the Learning of Shakespeare*, quotes an old pamphlet title-page, "...all men's arrows, whether the great man's flight, the gallant's rover, the wise man's pricke-shaft, the poor-man's but-shaft, or the fool's bird-bolt." The word in this sense does not appear in the great classic of archery, Ascham's *Toxophilus*. There is possibly some verbal jest here, clear to the original audience, though not to us.

my uncle's fool. No "fool" survives in the play. Yet he might have found employment among so many wise folk.

37. *subscrib'd for*, took up the challenge on behalf of Cupid.

38. *burbolt*, bird-bolt. The bird-bolt was a blunt-headed arrow used with a cross-bow. Hence a fool could safely use it. "A fool's bolt is soon shot" is quoted as a proverb in *Henry V*, III. 7. 137. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV. 3. 25 we have: "Shot, by heaven: proceed sweet Cupid, thou hast thumpt him with thy Birdbolt under the left pap." In *Twelfth Night*, Olivia reproving Malvolio's harshness to the Fool (I. 5) says, "To be generous, guiltless, and of free disposition, is to take those things for Birdbolts, that you deem Cannon bullets."

41. *tax*, censure. Compare Hamlet's "makes us traduc'd and tax'd of other nations."

42. *meet*, quits. The pun, after *eat* in the previous lines, is probably intentional. Observe that still another indication of Benedick's character is here given.

44. *victual*: "vittaile" in Q. Apparently the only singular use as a noun in Shakespeare. Elsewhere "victuals."

4. 46. *stomach*: used in a double sense—bodily appetite and keenness for combat. Compare Henry V's "he which hath no stomach to this fight."

50. *stufft*. Not used in a derogatory sense. See *Romeo and Juliet*, III. 5. 181:

> "A gentleman of Noble Parentage,
> Of fair Demeans, Youthful and Nobly allied,
> Stuft as they say with Honorable parts"

and *The Winter's Tale*, II. 1. 184:

> "Cleomenes and Dion, whom you know
> Of stufft sufficiency."

But Beatrice seizes on the word and gives it a derogatory meaning, as if Benedick were "a man of straw," the mere image of a man. The word had other meanings, as we gather from a later scene.

53. *but for the stuffing well*. The present text adheres strictly to the form given in Q. and F. Theobald, followed by succeeding editors, amended the punctuation to "but for the stuffing,—well, we are all mortal." This is the form now generally printed; but there is nothing in the old punctuation to forbid this reading, and Theobald's liberal insertion of stops is therefore not necessary. Excessive punctuation invites a slow and heavy delivery altogether out of place here. It has been suggested that the exclamatory use of *well* is uncommon in Shakespeare. The most striking example occurs in *Richard II*, III. 3: "Well, well, I see I talk but idly." In *Othello*, IV. 1, Iago and Roderigo make much play with the words "Very well"; but this second instance is hardly a parallel. There are, however, several instances in the present play, e.g. at line 231 of this scene, and again lower down. It is possible to read the sentence as meaning this: "Benedick may be stuffed, but, as he is mortal like the rest of us, is the stuffing quite what your eulogy implies?" I, therefore, leave the original punctuation, and the reader can take the passage in whatever sense pleases him. Personally, I think that the Theobald interpretation is right, and that this reading is more in the vein of Beatrice.

56. *they never meet*: note the implication that they have often met.

59. *five wits*. Chaucer's Parson observes: "for certes delices been after the appetites of the five wittes, as sighte, herynge, smellynge, savorynge, and touchynge" (Globe ed. p. 270). These, too, are the five wits of which Everyman must take leave when he goes down to the grave. But they are properly the "five

senses," as distinguished from the "five wits" by Shakespeare himself in Sonnet cxli:

> "But my five wits nor my five senses can
> Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee."

Here then we should understand the five wits as memory, fancy, judgment, imagination and commonsense. It is not clear with which of them Benedick escaped—possibly the last.

4. 61. *keep himself warm.* Apparently a proverbial phrase, as it is frequently found. It indicates possession of the simplest commonsense. Thus in *Taming of the Shrew*, II. 1, Petruchio exclaims, "Am I not wise?" and Kate replies shortly, "Yes: keep you warm." In like vein is Sir Andrew's reply to Maria (*Twelfth Night*, I. 3): "I am not such an ass but I can keep my hand dry." A similar expression occurs in the piece almost exactly contemporary with *Much Ado*—Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, II. 2: "Marry, I will come to her, (and shee alwayes weares a muffe, if you be remembred) and I will tell her, *Madame, your whole selfe cannot but be perfectly wise: for your hands have wit enough to keep themselves warme.*"

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62. *a difference.* A figure added to a coat of arms to distinguish one family from another or to show how distant a younger branch is from the elder or principal branch. A volume such as St John Hope's *A Grammar of English Heraldry* (pp. 24–38) will give illustrations showing how "a difference" is borne. The classic quotation, of course, is Ophelia's, "O, you must wear your rue with a difference."

63. *to be known*, etc. The meaning is clear, though the construction is not. The difficulty lies in the phrase "to be known a reasonable creature." To take this (see J. C. Smith's note) as a nominative ("to be known a reasonable creature is all the wealth that he hath left") on the strength of the punctuation in Q., is to miss the point of the passage and to lay too much stress on a comma: the punctuation of Q. and F. is not grammatical—it frequently separates subject and verb. The utterance of Beatrice is a gibe; but there is no gibe in saying of a man that all the wealth he has left is to be known as a reasonable creature: some of us would be grateful for even a moiety of such "wealth." What Beatrice says is something like this: "All the wealth (such as it is) that he has left to prove that he is a rational creature and not an animal is a very small quantity of low commonsense." It seems to me, therefore, that "to be known a reasonable creature" must be taken adverbially, modifying "hath

left," i.e. *it is all that he has left to prove that he is a rational being.* The old interposed comma between *left* and *to be known* affects neither grammar nor meaning.

5. 65. *sworn brother.* "The *fratres conjurati* were persons linked together in small fellowships, perhaps not more than two, who undertook to defend and assist each other...under the sanction of a stricter tie than that which binds the individuals composing a whole army" (quoted by Furness from Hunter). Opera-goers will remember the ceremony with which Siegfried and Gunther swear *Bluthrüderschaft* in the first act of *Die Götterdämmerung*. The phrase long survived its primitive meaning, and in the mouth of Bardolph (*Henry V*, II. 1), "We'll be all three sworn brothers to France," it signifies something like honour among thieves. It comes much more movingly in Richard II's farewell to his wife (v. 1), "I am sworn brother, Sweet, to grim Necessity." The point is fairly important. It indicates (1) that Benedick is popular with young men, and (2) that Claudio (unlike Benedick) is not well known in this circle.

66. *Is't possible.* The Messenger (being a Euphuist) has no sense of humour, and takes Beatrice seriously, and she therefore leads him further.

68. *the next block.* The next fashion. Hats are still "blocked" in the language of modern hatters and can be "re-blocked" to any new shape imposed by changes of feminine fashion. Thus, to quote *Cynthia's Revels* once more (I. 4), "You shall alter it [a hat] to what forme you please, it will take any block."

69. *in your books.* "In your good books" we should now say. The origin of the phrase is supposed to be obscure, and is referred by some to (1) visiting lists, (2) college books, (3) family records, (4) commercial ledgers and so forth. Furness has a whole page of suggestions. But to any puzzled person may we not say, "What, art a Heathen? how dost thou understand the Scripture?" For see Exodus xxxii. 31–2: "And Moses returned unto the Lord and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin —: and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy Book which thou hast written." So, too, Psalm lxix. 28, and very notably Rev. xx. 12. The medieval mind was habituated to the terror and perhaps the hope of such lines as

"Liber scriptus proferetur,
In quo totum continetur,
Unde mundus judicetur."

70. *an*, if; printed *and* in Q. and F. See Glossary.

burn my study, i.e. my library, or collection of books—the *riposte* of Beatrice to the word "books."

5. 72. *squarer*: quarrelsome or pugnacious person. "To square up" is to take the attitude of boxing. There seems to be some anxiety in the repeated question of Beatrice about Benedick's supposed "companion."

78. *presently*. Instantly, as nearly always in Sh. Cf. "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matt. xxvi. 53). The idiom can still be heard in some parts of England.

81. *will hold friends*. I will endeavour to be the friend rather than the foe of a lady with such a gift of language.

83. *run mad*: i.e. with the "Benedict" disease, whatever that was, for the word is thus spelt here both in Q. and F. F. shortens the opening words to *You'l nere*.

John the bastard. This villain, together with Edmund, another evil-doer born out of wedlock, might be taken as Shakespeare's general view of such characters, were not Faulconbridge in *King John* as decisive on the other side. Should "Balthasar" be "Borachio"?

86. *are you*. Thus Q.; F. has "you are." There is no difference. Incidentally it may be noted that if Leonato has come "to meet" his trouble, either literally or metaphorically, the scene can scarcely be *inside* Leonato's house.

90. *for trouble*, etc. Observe the euphuistic, antithetical form of the prose. Conscious, elaborate, and sedulously artificial composition often precedes a natural grace of prose in the history both of national literature and of individual writers. The euphuistic mannerisms of much Elizabethan prose were the transition stage between the shapeless string of relative clauses common in early Tudor English and the easy naturalism of the Queen Anne writers.

92. *takes his leave*. We should say "its"; but this is a modern form, which was just coming into use in Shakespeare's own time. The few references in Bartlett's *Concordance* shew "its" ten times and "his" five, the more usual neuter possessive being "it," used seventeen times. "Its" does not appear at all in the Authorised Version of 1611.

93. *charge*, burden.

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98. *You have it full*, you have received a good straight hit in reply.

99. *fathers herself*, shews her parentage by her resemblance to him. One can hear precisely the same expression even to-day.

102. *she would not have*, etc. Not a witty or even a polite remark, for all Benedick appears to mean is, "Although she is like him, she would not care to exchange her young face for his

old one." No doubt Leonato was represented as an old, bearded man, and the remark accompanied by a gesture of comparison.

6. 105. *still*, "always," as frequently in Shakespeare—e.g. "Hourly joys be still upon you" (*Tempest*, IV. 1). Beatrice, apparently unable to endure indifference, is the first of the two to speak.

107. *Lady Disdain*. The first reference of Benedick to Beatrice, as of Beatrice to Benedick, is a nickname. Observe, too, Benedick's affectation of not having noticed her before. As we shall discover, Benedick is full of these nicknames.

111. *must convert*, "must change"—used intransitively, as several times in Shakespeare; e.g. *Macbeth*, IV. 3:

> "Be this the whetstone of your sword: let grief
> Convert to anger."

116. *I love none*. Benedick protests too much; but he is anxious to preserve before Beatrice his assumed indifference.

117. *A dear happiness*. "Dear" in Shakespeare is an intensifying adjective, applicable to things good or bad. Thus Hamlet's "my dearest foe," and, later in the present play, "Claudio shall render me a dear account."

119. *humour*. Your way of mind—a reference to the old doctrine of the "humours," or fluids, that determined a man's nature.

123. *predestinate*. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* explains such forms thus: "Chiefly (through French) from Latin past participle in *-atus* (1st conjugation), which became successively *-at, ate*, as *desolate*. Many such adjectives formed causative verbs and served as past participles to them, till later the native *-ed* was added." Benedick's suggestion is that the husband of such a shrew as Beatrice would be sure to get his face scratched. If his suggestion is rude, her reply is even ruder—and much feebler.

126. *as yours were*. Strictly this should be "as yours is"—the supposition being limited to "an 'twere" (if it were). The second (unnecessary) subjunctive form is no doubt an echo from the first (necessary) form. A writer (anonymous) quoted by Furness has suggested the emendation "as you wear." Comment is needless.

127. *parrot teacher*, given to much repetition.

131. *a continuer*. Furness quotes Madden (*Diary of Master William Silence*): "Now can the happy possessor of a good continuer (as a stayer was then called by horsemen) realise the force of the ditty, 'As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.'" The sense requires *were* before *so good*.

a God's name, in God's name.

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133. *a jade's trick*, a trick (or kick) worthy of a vicious horse—an obvious retort to Benedick's speech. The phrase is proverbial.

135. *That is the sum of all.* Q. reads: "That is the summe of all: Leonato, signor Claudio, and signor Benedicke, my deere friend Leonato, hath invited you all etc." F. reads: "This is the summe of all: *Leonato*, signior *Claudio* and signior *Benedicke*; my deere friend *Leonato*, hath invited you all etc." This is hard to understand, and most modern editors follow the Cambridge text, reading, "This is the sum of all, Leonato: Signior Claudio, etc." This alteration of the punctuation is thus justified: during the skirmish of wit between Benedick and Beatrice, Don Pedro and Leonato have been conversing apart and making arrangements for the visit of the Prince and his friends. Pedro then breaks off the conversation with the words, "This is the sum of all, Leonato": and calls Claudio and Benedick to tell them the news.

We should avoid a drastic alteration even in the stops if it can be avoided; and it can be avoided here. Pedro is plainly *not* talking to Leonato. When he suddenly intervenes he calls Leonato to him so that they stand together—the host and the royal guest; then he calls Claudio and Benedick (the other visitors), and tells them formally of the invitation, which has obviously been given at the beginning of the skirmish between Beatrice and Benedick, in continuation of Leonato's polite references to the Prince's visit. So much for the position of the colon; but what is the meaning of "That is the summe of all," the first word of which F. alters to "This"? The simplest explanation is that it is Pedro's way of ending a skirmish that shewed signs of becoming too personal. Interrupting the talk of all on the stage (for we are not to suppose that Beatrice and Benedick are the only speakers, with all the rest as a mute audience) Pedro says, "This is the conclusion of our conversation: Leonato has invited us all to stay here." The phrase occurs in several places, e.g.:

> "Women and fools, break off your conference.
> King John, this is the very sum of all:
> England and Ireland, Anjou, Touraine, Maine,
> In right of Arthur do I claim of thee."
>
> *King John*, II. I. 150–3.

> "The sum of all our answer is but this,
> We would not seek a battle, as we are:
> Nor, as we are, we say we will not shun it."
>
> *Henry V*, III. 6. 172–4.

See also, 2 *Hen. IV*, I. I. 131:

"The sum of all
Is that the king hath won."

Pedro's "month" is to be taken humorously, not seriously: it doesn't affect the "time scheme." Other interpretations of the words are possible. For instance, "That is the summe of all" (in the reading of Q.) may be taken to refer to the conversation of Beatrice and Benedick, and specially to the lady's petulant 'last word': "You always end with a jade's trick, I know you of old." "That (interposes Pedro) is the usual end of all such jangles; therefore let us talk of something else." With either interpretation we can preserve unaltered the original texts.

7. 142. *let me bid*, etc. Neither Q. nor F. indicates who is addressed here, there being nothing but a comma after *forsworn*. But obviously the first "my lord" refers to Pedro and the second to Don John, who, so far, has said nothing audibly, and even now says as little as possible. His inferiority of birth is not mentioned in the actual text till v. I. 185.

146. *Please it*. Here a question, Will your Grace be good enough to lead on?

147. *go together*, a royal piece of courtesy.

Exeunt. Manent. The direction is given thus in Q.

150. *I noted her not*. *Not* being pronounced *note*. Benedick's reply is equivalent to the feeble schoolboy pun, "I did note."

152. *Do you question*. Benedick here admits that his misogyny is only a pose, for *simple* is *sincere* and *professed* is almost *pretended*.

157. *too low*. The fashion for women in Shakespeare's day was to be tall and fair. The lady of the Sonnets (whoever she was) is reproached for being dark; and Hermia, who is both dark and short, is called "Ethiope," "tawny Tartar," "minimus," "dwarf," and other tasteful names, by the distracted Lysander.

161. *I do not like her*. Benedick admits her beauty, but will not surrender his pose of opposition.

167. *with a sad brow*, seriously; as in Rosalind's, "Nay, but the devil take mocking: speak, sad brow and true maid" (*As You Like It*, III. 2). Compare Olivia's reference to Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* as being "sad and civil," and her remark, "I sent for thee upon a sad occasion," where she does not in the least mean what a modern would mean by a "sad occasion."

flouting Jack. Shakespeare's "Jacks" are many, and, except when properly applied to great Jack Falstaff, they are always terms of contempt; see specially, *Richard III*, I. 3. 72:

"Since every Jack became a gentleman,
There's many a gentle person made a Jack."

"Flouting" is "mocking." Benedick's speech may be paraphrased thus: "Are you speaking seriously or just exaggerating (as usual) about an ordinary woman? You will next be pretending that blind Cupid is able to find a hare in its form and that Vulcan the Smith is a delicate worker in wood." Madden (*op. cit.*) says: "First comes the hare-finder, most venerable of institutions. For Arrian, writing some fourteen centuries before our diarist, tells us that in his day it was the custom to send out hare-finders early in the morning of the coursing days. To detect a hare in brown fallow or russet bracken needs sharp and practised eyes."

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170. *to go in the song*, to keep in tune with you.

174. *there's her cousin*. Benedick is as eager to talk about Beatrice, as Beatrice had been to talk about Benedick. He jeers at Claudio for praising Hero, and immediately proceeds to praise Beatrice himself.

175. *exceeds*. The expected relative is absent. See note on *will be*, l. 17.

180. *Is't come*, etc. I retain the reading of Q. and F. which agree exactly. Editors, beginning with Pope, have re-punctuated and re-spelt it thus: "Is't come to this, i' faith? Hath not etc." All of which may be preferable, but none of which has any authority.

181. *with suspicion*. Midas wore a cap to hide his ass's ears; Claudio will come to wearing a cap to hide the traditional horns of the deceived husband.

184. *wear the print of it*. Do it thoroughly, so that the matrimonial noose shows its mark.

sigh away Sundays. Sunday, when the usual escape of work or sport or business fails, is the longest of days to the captive husband. What Benedick therefore says is: If you must be a husband at all, then be the complete thing.

Enter Don Pedro. Q. and F. have *Enter don Pedro, John the bastard*. But John says nothing at all during the scene and has to be told later by Borachio what happens during its course. Possibly the direction is a relic that has survived revision. It is worse than unnecessary now. In the story of Bandello, the equivalent of Don John is in love with the equivalent of Hero, and possibly Shakespeare (or his dramatic predecessor, if there was one) originally gave Don John some words in this scene.

188. *constrain*. Benedick's reluctance is of course humorously assumed—he is eager to tell the news that will provoke the usual jests against the latest recruit to the army of husbands. So, in

the next line, Pedro's appeal to Benedick's allegiance is a jest. The scene is to be taken lightly, not seriously.

8. 193. *with who. Who* for *whom* with a preposition is common still in speech (where the accusative sounds a little pedantic); it is therefore to be expected in the dramatic representation of speech.

now that is your Grace's part. "This question should be asked by your Grace." That is, Benedick asks (playing the part of Pedro), and answers (playing the part of Claudio).

196. *so were it uttred.* Commentators have obscured this passage by taking it as an evasion on Claudio's part. There is obviously no evasion and no attempt at evasion. Benedick has been asking and answering all the questions in the character of Pedro and Claudio; and Claudio says, "If this were so"—i.e. if the questions had been asked thus in reality, "so were it uttered"—i.e. they would have been answered just as they have been. It is absurd to suppose that part of the speech should be given to Don Pedro. The whole point of the passage is that Benedick the "anti-husband" is enjoying himself. Alas, regardless of his doom, the jesting bachelor plays!

197. *the old tale.* What old tale? Evidently some old tale containing the terrifying repetitions of sinister phrase beloved by all children. See, for instance, *Nurse's Stories* in *The Uncommercial Traveller*, where we get delightfully blood-curdling repetitions of

"A Lemon has pips,
And a Yard has ships,
And I'll have Chips";

and even more blood-curdling repetitions of "he chopped her in pieces, and peppered her, and salted her, and put her in the pie, and sent it to the baker's, and ate it all, and picked the bones." In the Variorum edition of 1821, there is a note on this point contributed by Mr Blakeway. It is (like Dickens's "Captain Murderer" story just quoted) one of the several versions of Bluebeard:

"The old tale may be, perhaps, still extant in some collections of such things, or Shakespeare may have heard it, (as I have, related by a great aunt,) in his childhood: 'Once upon a time, there was a young lady (called Lady Mary in the story), who had two brothers. One summer they all three went to a country-seat of theirs, which they had not before visited. Among the other gentry in the neighbourhood, who came to see them, was a Mr Fox, a bachelor, with whom they, particularly the young lady, were much pleased. He used often to dine with them, and frequently invited Lady Mary to come and see his house. One

day that her brothers were absent elsewhere, and she had nothing better to do, she determined to go thither, and accordingly set out unattended. When she arrived at the house and knocked at the door, no one answered. At length she opened it, and went in. Over the portal of the hall was written, "Be bold, be bold, but not too bold." She advanced; over the staircase, the same inscription. She went up; over the entrance of a gallery, the same. She proceeded; over the door of a chamber, "Be bold, be bold, but not too bold, lest that your heart's blood should run cold." She opened it; it was full of skeletons, tubs full of blood, etc. She retreated in haste; coming down stairs, she saw out of a window, Mr Fox advancing towards the house, with a drawn sword in one hand, while with the other he dragged along a young lady by her hair. Lady Mary had just time to slip down and hide herself under the stairs, before Mr Fox and his victim arrived at the foot of them. As he pulled the young lady up stairs, she caught hold of one of the bannisters with her hand, on which was a rich bracelet. Mr Fox cut it off with his sword: the hand and the bracelet fell into Lady Mary's lap, who then contrived to escape unobserved, and got home safe to her brothers' house. After a few days Mr Fox came to dine with them as usual (whether by invitation, or of his own accord, this deponent saith not). After dinner, when the guests began to amuse each other with extraordinary anecdotes, Lady Mary at length said she would relate to them a remarkable dream she had lately had. "I dreamed," said she, "that as you, Mr Fox, had often invited me to your house, I would go there one morning. When I came to the house, I knocked, etc., but no one answered. When I opened the door, over the hall was written, 'Be bold, be bold, but not too bold.' But," said she, turning to Mr Fox and smiling, "it is not so, nor it was not so"; then she pursues the rest of the story, concluding at every turn with, "It is not so, nor it was not so," till she comes to the room full of dead bodies, when Mr Fox took up the burden of the tale, and said, "It is not so, nor it was not so, and God forbid it should be so," Lady Mary retorts, "But it is so, and it was so, and here the hand I have to show," at the same time producing the hand and the bracelet from her lap: whereupon, the guests drew their swords, and instantly cut Mr Fox into a thousand pieces.'"

8. 199. *God forbid*, etc. A clear refutation of those who charge Claudio with evasion.

203. *to fetch me in.* "Fetch" both as verb and noun, has the sense of "trap," or "trick" or "test." Claudio says, in effect, "Do you say this because you think so, or because you want to

lead me on?" There is a slight difficulty about the tense of "speak." In the successive speeches Q. makes Claudio say "speake," Pedro, "speake," Claudio, "spoke," and Benedick, "spoke." F. gives successively "speake," "speake," "spoke," "speake." The sequence in Q. appears the more rational. Benedick's "two faiths" are generally referred to his prince and his friend. But it is much more probable that he is alluding to the speech in which he plays the part of two persons.

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213. *an obstinate heretic*: how? Benedick certainly did not despise beauty; he scoffed at the *power* of female beauty, and despised those who surrendered themselves too readily to its charm. But no doubt "beauty" is here used something in the sense of "the fair sex."

215. *in the force of his will*, because he had made up his mind to play the part of a heretic, not because he sincerely believed in the heresy he professed. Benedick's reference to the stake has made some commentators (beginning with Bp Warburton) see here a theological discrimination between heresy that may be innocent and pardonable and heresy that is wilful and invincible.

219. *a rechate*. A hunting call on the horn. For many of the possible "recheats" see Furness. But there is no need to labour the point. Benedick is again alluding to the traditional horns of the deceived husband, as he does in the "invisible baldrick," a baldric being really a gorgeous sash of leather worn crosswise from the shoulder (need we refer to the baldric of Porthos?). The tune, so to speak, of Benedick's remark is to be found in *As You Like It*:

> "What shall he have that killed the deer?
> His leather skin and horns to wear."

And so on.

221. *shall pardon me*. Women must excuse me if I refuse to wear these ornaments.

223. *fine...finer*: *fine* = conclusion; *finer* = more gaily dressed. Shakespeare could never resist these verbal tricks. See, specially, the passage in the graveyard scene of *Hamlet*, where there is a string of quibbles on this very word. "A quibble," says Johnson, with some severity and justice, "is the golden apple for which he [Shakespeare] will always turn aside from his career, or stoop from his elevation. A quibble, poor and barren as it is, gave him such delight, that he was content to purchase it by the sacrifice of reason, propriety and truth."

9. 227. *lose more blood*, look paler for love.

229. *ballad-maker's pen*, especially such as make ballads to a mistress's eyebrows.

233. *a bottle*. Not, of course, a glass bottle. Bottles were made of leather ("the shepherd's...cold thin drink out of his leather bottle," 3 *Hen. VI*, II. 5) or of wicker ("A knave teach me my duty? I'll beat the knave into a twiggen-bottle," *Othello*, II. 3). Shooting at a cat imprisoned in a closed basket was one of the agreeable sports of our forefathers. See Furness for many allusions to the practice.

234. *clapt on the shoulder*, as a sign of approval. There is obviously no reference to the "accolade," or the following sentence would be "and call'd Sir...."

235. *call'd Adam*. An allusion not now satisfactorily explicable. Theobald suggested a connection with the old border ballad of *Adam Bel, Clym of the Cleugh, and William of Cloudesly*, beginning:

> "Mery it was in grene forest,
> Among the levës grene
> Where that men walke both east and west,
> Wyth bowes and arrowes kene."

It was printed in 1536, and perhaps even earlier. It is a delightful ballad, telling of many adventures, including the shooting of an apple from the head of the archer's son; but William (as elsewhere) and not Adam is the hero of the story. However, as Adam's name comes first, pernaps he is the person alluded to. See F. Sidgwick, *Ballads of Robin Hood*.

236. *as time shall try*. A proverbial utterance again alluded to in *As You Like It*, IV. 1: "Well, Time is the old justice that examines all such offenders, and let Time try.'

237. *the savage bull*. This is a quotation, the immediate source being Kyd, *The Spanish Tragedie* (*c.* 1586), II. 1:

> "In time the savage bull sustaines the yoake,
> In time all haggard hawkes will stoop to lure,
> In time small wedges cleave the hardest oake,
> In time the flint is pearst with softest shower."

A little earlier, a similar line appears in the *Hekatompathia or Passionate Centuri of Love* of Thomas Watson (1575?), the forty-seventh Love Passion of which begins thus:

> "In time the Bull is brought to weare the yoake";

and Watson himself gives as his source an Italian poet, from whom the line is traced back to Ovid, *Tristia*, Bk IV, Elegy 6:

> "Tempore ruricolae patiens fit taurus aratri,
> Praebet et incurvo colla premenda jugo."

"In time the bull becomes used to the field-tilling plough, and proffers his neck to be pressed by the crooked yoke."

But Shakespeare (who may or may not have known all the other examples) is undoubtedly quoting from Kyd. We shall hear more (not to say too much) about this "savage bull."

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247. *in Venice.* Venice was a capital city of Venus, as readers of *A Toccata of Galuppi's* will understand. The inevitable quibble upon "quiver" and "quake" (with "earthquake" to follow) again exhibits Shakespeare's besetting sin. Benedick means that nothing but an earth-quiver will make him quake—certainly not a Cupid's quiver.

249. *temporize with the hours.* I incline to the belief that "temporize" is used as if it belongs to "temper" and not to "tempus"; i.e. "you will cool down in course of time." But the word is clearly spelt "temporize" in Q. and F. In *Coriolanus*, IV. 6, where Menenius, referring to Coriolanus says, "All's well and might have been much better, if he could have temporized," the usual modern meaning fits quite well, but the present suggested meaning fits even better. In *King John* too (V. 2):

"The Dauphin is too wilful-opposite,
And will not temporize with my entreaties;
He flatly says he'll not lay down his arms,"

we have again the sense of excess needing a cooler "temper." The same sense is clear in *Troilus*, IV. 4, where Cressida exclaims:

"Why tell you me of moderation?
The grief is fine, full, perfect, that I taste,
And violenteth in a sense as strong
As that which causeth it: how can I moderate it?
If I could temporize with my affection,
Or brew it to a weak and colder palate,
The like allayment could I give my grief:
My love admits no qualifying dross:
No more my grief, in such a precious loss."

Cressida's "temporizing" is an "allayment" and has nothing to do with "time."

253. *matter enough*, sense enough.

254. *and so I commit you.* Benedick here inadvertently begins the formal flourish that ends a letter, and the others instantly take it up in turn and finish it. Furness quotes to this effect: "Barnaby Googe thus ends his Dedication to the first edition of *Palingenius*, 1560: And thus committyng Your Ladiship with

all yours to the tuicion of the moste mercifull God, I ende. From Staple Inne at London, the eighte and twenty of March." *Tuition* means *keeping*.

10. 257. *The sixth of July*. Wright says, "Old Midsummer Day, an appropriate date for such Midsummer madness." F. G. Fleay, however, takes the date seriously in conjunction with Leonato's "Monday" (II. I. 323), and bases thereon an elaborate conjecture about the date of composition and re-touching of the play. But surely he must first prove that Acts I and II were written on the same day.

259. *guarded*, trimmed, adorned. Compare *Merchant of Venice*, II. 2, "Give him a livery more guarded than his fellows"; and *Henry VIII*, Prol.:

"a fellow
In a long motley coat guarded with yellow."

"Guarded with fragments" resembles the "guarded with rags" of 2 *Henry V*, IV. I.

260. *neither*, introducing the negative sense implicit in the statement. Similar negative endings can be heard in modern slang expressions.

flout old ends, make a mock of old tags or endings, such as the letter-endings mocked by the other two.

261. *examine your conscience*. The sense of this is not very clear. Benedick perhaps means something of this sort: "Your discourse is decked out with many rags very loosely tacked on; you had better examine your conscience to see if 'in God's keeping' and other ancient commendations ought to be used as jocular rags and tatters." Or we may take it, perhaps preferably, thus: "You have mocked my little tag; your own talk has been full of very tasteless tags; examine your conscience and see if your own speech isn't more open to amendment than mine."

263. *My liege*. Observe that this is the first use of verse in the play—an indication that the plane has risen. Claudio means that Pedro can help him urge his suit to the Governor of Messina—an important person, unlike Bandello's impoverished Lionato, whose very poverty makes the subsequent repudiation of Fenicia more credible.

264. *to teach*: the meaning is clear; there is no need to tamper with the text, as some have done: "My affection for you is at your service; shew me what you want it to do for you etc."

267. *any son*. An odd question. Claudio, with an uncle in Messina, and previously acquainted with Hero, was likely to know as least as much as Don Pedro; moreover his question has a cautiously mercenary note, in the key of which Pedro gives his answer. Did Shakespeare mean us to understand that Hero's

dower was no temptation to Claudio when he suspected her of unchastity? Timbreo repudiates a suspected poor girl; Claudio shall repudiate a suspected rich girl. But Claudio's question is not very amiable, especially as he hints in the following speech that Hero has been in his mind for some time. Dramatically, however, it is necessary that Hero should not have a brother—at least of fighting age.

10. 269. *Dost thou affect her.* That is, seriously. So far the affair had been made a joke of; *to affect* = *to love* is common in Shakespeare.

276. *rooms*, places.

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280. *a lover*, a development of Claudio's final "lik'd" on the lines of his own earlier statement about "liking" and "love."

281. *book of words*, you will tire everyone by talking like a book.

283. *break*, open the subject, or communicate, as frequently in Shakespeare. F. omits

"and with her father,
And thou shalt have her:"

an obvious mistake of the printer (or his reading-boy), whose eye took up the wrong "her." Anyone who has used a typewriter will understand how easy it is to do this.

284. *was't not to this end*, etc. Notice that Claudio himself has been hinting at a wooing by proxy—or at least at a direct intervention by the prince.

285. *twist so fine a story*, the slang of the sea has accustomed us to "spinning a yarn."

287. *complexion*, outward appearance. The word (like most similar forms in Shakespeare) must be pronounced com-plex-i-oon.

289. *salv'd*, made it smoother and so more easy of acceptance.

290. *What need*, etc. Some (e.g. Abbott) take "need" as the impersonal of "needs"; but though Shakespeare (or his printer) is not consistent, it will be found that most commonly "What" is followed by "need," as, for instance:

Comedy of Errors, III. 2:

"Be secret-false: what need she be acquainted?"

Merry Wives, VI. 5:

"What need you tell me that?"

King John, IV. 1:

"What need you be so boisterous rough?"

Now it is plain in all these instances that "need" is more noun than verb, the expanded sense being, "What need is (or was) there that etc.?" In the present compressed line, "be" or "should be" must be understood after "bridge." "What need is there that the bridge should be much broader than the flood"—what need is there for more than the occasion demands? It is unnecessary therefore to suppose that *need* is the impersonal form of a verb.

II. 291. *The fairest grant*, etc. The three lines must be taken together. The meaning is this: The best gift to a suitor is the thing he needs; let him look, therefore, that what he wants is suitable for him: enough has been said; you are in love, and I will get you the remedy.

292. *'tis once*, probably equivalent to "this once," that is, "on the present occasion your need is that you are in love, and want the beloved."

294. *revelling*, a masked ball.

297. *unclasp*, open my heart. Used several times in this sense by Shakespeare, notably in *Twelfth Night*, I. 4:

> "Thou know'st no less but all; I have unclasp'd
> To thee the book even of my secret soul."

299. *And strong encounter*. Pedro's image is drawn from the tilt-yard.

302. *presently*, immediately.

SCENE II

There is no scene division here either in Q. or F. The direction is *exeunt* (i.e. Pedro and Claudio); then,

Enter Leonato and an old man brother to Leonato.

The "old man" is presumably the person called "brother Anthony" in Act V. Rowe, who first made a list of the *dramatis personae*, Italianized it to Antonio, no doubt because in II. I, Ursula calls a masker, "Signior Anthonio." What part he plays (with a son of his own, too) in the establishment of Leonato it is difficult to say. Beatrice is another relative apparently billeted upon Leonato, who, perhaps, may sometimes have thought enviously of Melchisedec. The scene is probably somewhere in the house, and the modern stage-direction is "A Room in Leonato's House." It is "a front-stage scene. While this and the following scene are being played in front of the traverse, preparations are being made behind it for the elaborate full-stage scene in II. I. The time is Monday evening, before supper."

(F. S. Boas.) The scene must happen very soon after the first, for according to the opening line of the play Don Pedro arrives at "night" (i.e. late afternoon), yet long enough after that scene to allow news of the conversation between Pedro and Claudio to be reported (or mis-reported) first to the Old Man and then to Leonato. Which of the two reporters makes the blunder does not appear. Another difficulty about the scene will be dealt with in its place.

II. 1. *cousin*, any close relative, other than brother or sister. This son makes no spoken appearance in the play, though he is probably one of the "cousins" referred to at l. 22 of this scene.

4. *strange*, F. omits.

6. *events*, so in Q. and F. Shakespeare frequently uses this apparently false concord, so there is no grammatical reason for altering *events* to *event*. There may be a good euphonic reason: we can suppose, if we will, that the printer's boy called out *event stamps* and that the printer set up *events stamps*; but this is guess-work, and, in ordinary speech, the difference in sound is slight. The whole phrase is difficult. A language that can bring together such groups of consonants as *ntsst* and *mpsth* has no ground of complaint against the multi-consonantal Slavonic tongues.

a good cover, a good outward appearance.

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8. *thick-pleached alley*; a plaited or covered walk: *alley* is Fr. *allée*, a path. For *pleached* see Glossary. Cotgrave does not give that form. He has "*plesser*, to plash, to bow, fold, or plait young branches, one within another; also to thicken a hedge, or cover a walk, by plashing"; and under *plessis* he has "a hedge, or walk of plashed trees, etc." If we understand the "pleached alley" as something like a vine pergola we can take it as almost the only Italian touch in the play.

mine orchard. "Orchard" is simply "garden," and not a specific plantation for fruit. See Glossary. The difficulty comes in the word *mine*. Whose garden was it? Q. makes the Old Man (like Hamlet's paternal ghost) say *mine orchard*; F. makes him say *my orchard*. If this is taken as it stands, Act I. Sc. I must pass in *Anthony's* Orchard, and in at least one modern edition the scene is thus headed. But that is absurd. The action of the play obviously passes in the house of Leonato the Governor, who is the chief person and directing spirit of the place, the Old Man his brother being a very unimportant relative who only once gives any sign of real vitality. It is improbable that he has a garden of his very own attached to his brother's house and

that the distinguished guests are received there. This orchard, or garden, plays a large part in the story and is never called Anthony's. The simplest explanation of the *mine* is that the printer of Q. caught up the word from *a man of mine* a line below, and printed it instead of *the* (Boas). The printer of F. (or the provider of the copy), feeling that something ought to be done, altered it without correcting it. It is surely unnecessary to suppose (with Wright) that what Antonio's "man" (whoever he was) overheard was not the original conversation between Pedro and Claudio, but a repetition of it in another orchard. An Elizabethan audience did not trouble itself about niceties of place, and it is probable that Shakespeare shared that indifference. The point is not in the least important. *Mine* is therefore retained in the text, but it should be understood as a general and not as a specific possessive. It is worth notice that the man who was to be sent for and questioned never appears. See Introduction.

12. 12. *accordant*, likely to agree. It seems to be Shakespeare's only use of the word.

13. *by the top*, a variant of "to take Time by the forelock."

18. *till it appear itself*, "till it materializes: at present it exists only in hearsay." The form of "appear" is perhaps subjunctive or perhaps due to "shall" understood before it. Some editors change it to "approve"—with little justification.

21. *enter Musician and others*. Not in the original text; but some such stage-direction is necessary here. The "cousins" are those relatives or dependants who have to do their share in this hastily improvised entertainment. "O I cry you mercy friend" is plainly addressed to the musician whom brother Anthony's Son has brought; "good cousin" is perhaps the Son, or more likely his Father, for whom no *exit* is given, and who is therefore still on the stage.

The whole scene is a clumsy way of making Leonato aware that some one is amorously inclined towards his daughter. It raises many more difficulties than it solves. See the Introduction.

Scene III

There is no break in Q. or F. We know that a break indicating lapse of time should come here, for the supper which is prospective in the former scene is now actually taking place. The scene may be the same as the last—some ante-room in the house of Leonato; but it is a "front-stage" scene, whatever place it may represent.

12. 1. *What the good-year.* An Elizabethan exclamation of frequent occurrence, but of uncertain origin. It indicates some degree of impatience.

2. *out of measure*, immoderately. John's reply means that the occasion, i.e. the disability of his birth, is to him immeasurably disagreeable, and his moodiness is commensurate.

6. *brings.* F. has "bringeth."

8. *sufferance*, endurance.

11. *under Saturn.* In medieval astrology the aspect of the planets at a man's birth determined his disposition. Saturn (according to Batman, quoted by Furness) "maketh a man browne and fowle, misdoing, slowe, and heavie, eleinge and sorie, seldome gladde and merrye, or laughing." We still use the adjective "saturnine."

goest about; *to go about* is *to attempt*.

a moral medicine, etc. Observe the intentional alliteration. A "mischief" is a wound or hurt. What (says John) is the use of moral tags to a man who is suffering from a wound that can never be healed? See V. 1, where Leonato says the same to his brother.

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16. *claw*, scratch, tickle, and so, flatter, cajole. It will be observed that John, like all such morose creatures, expects the world to keep time with his grievances. Your thoroughgoing brooder hates to be deprived of his supposed injuries.

19. *controlment*, constraint or check.

20. *of late stood out.* The first scene mentions the reconciliation. The nature of the difference is not indicated. We may assume that John in some way had sided with the French in a recent battle. Certain editors think this speech is meant to be written in verse. Here and there are metrical passages, and in Q. and F. John's speech at the entrance of Borachio is printed in two lines of verse. We have followed the old text—the nature of the whole scene indicates prose rather than verse as the medium. Possibly there was some revision here.

25. *a canker*, a dog-rose; also the "worm i' the bud" that feeds on beauty. The former is the sense here, as in these passages:

(1) 1 *Hen. IV*, I. 3. 171–5:

> "Or fill up chronicles in time to come,
> That men of your nobility and power
> Did gage them both in an unjust behalf
> To put down Richard, that sweet lovely rose,
> And plant this thorn, this canker, Bolingbroke."

(2) *Sonnet LIV:*

"O, how much more doth beauty beauteous seem
By that sweet ornament which truth doth give!
The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
For that sweet odour which doth in it live.
The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye
As the perfumed tincture of the roses,
Hang on such thorns and play as wantonly
When summer's breath their masked buds discloses:
But, for their virtue only is their show,
They live unwoo'd, and unrespected fade,
Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so."

13. 26. *blood*, disposition, temperament. He is not referring to his birth.

27. *fashion a carriage*, shape my demeanour.

29. *it must not be denied.* In Mod. Eng. we should say "it cannot be denied that I am, etc."

30. *trusted with a muzzle.* "I am so little trusted that I am like a dog that is muzzled, or a horse that is hobbled." John (being a villain) mixes his metaphors and continues: "Therefore I am like a caged bird and I refuse to sing. If my mouth were free I would bite; if my legs were free I should go as I choose. I cannot do any of these things, therefore I will do what mischief I can."

36. *I use*, make use of. John not only mixes his metaphors, but makes puns; for his reply is, "I use it in deed and I use it as my only companion"—"to use" signifying also (but rarely) "to make a companion of."

F. reads, "I will make all use of it."

38. *I came.* "The aorist for the perfect" (Deighton). In Mod. Eng. we should say, "I have just come."

42. *what is he for a fool.* Gifford, in his notes on Jonson, describes a similar expression as "Pure German in its idiom...*was ist das für ein*, etc." The usage is very common in Elizabethan English. Its modern equivalent would be, "What fool is it?"

47. *A proper squire*, used contemptuously, of course.

49. *on Hero.* Q. spells it "one Hero." *Marry* is spelt *Mary* consistently in Q. We have retained the now usual form, as it indicates the pronunciation.

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51. *A very forward March-chick.* Obviously meant for Hero, who is supposed to be quite young. In Bandello's story, Fenicia is sixteen. Others, less convincingly, have applied it to Claudio as an "upstart."

14. 53. *entertain'd for*, engaged as.

54. *smoking a musty room*, i.e. deodorizing it, instead of freshening it with air. The practice is still used, with strong-smelling liquids as deodorizers. Steevens quotes Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*: "The smoake of juniper is in greate request with us at Oxford, to sweeten our chambers." Judges on Assize are still equipped with a bouquet of flowers, a relic of the days when "gaol-fever" had no respect even for the Bench, and when the substitution of a pleasant smell for a bad one was considered sanitary. The modern smelling-bottle is just such a substitution. No explanation is forthcoming as to how or why a known follower of the Prince's brother was "entertain'd for a perfumer."

comes me. This construction is called the "ethical dative." It is common in Shakespeare. Compare *Twelfth Night*, III. 2: "Why, then, build me thy fortunes upon the basis of valour. Challenge me the count's youth to fight with him"; *Merry Wives*, II. 2: "She's as fartuous a civil modest wife, and one, I tell you, that will not miss you morning nor evening prayer, as any is in Windsor." See also II. 3. 104 of the present play. The "ethical dative" is sometimes called the dative of feeling, and indicates some degree of personal interest in the statement. Its use is confined to personal pronouns. In Latin it is a colloquialism, common in comedy, and almost entirely absent from serious poetry of the best period.

56. *arras*, curtains, named from Arras. Were these curtains wall-hangings or did they here cover a window? If they covered a window Borachio might have imperfectly overheard Pedro and Claudio as they talked in the garden. Otherwise we must suppose that Pedro and Claudio renewed their arrangement in this room. We now hear of the projected marriage and the proxy wooing for the *third* time.

61. *my overthrow*. How Claudio had risen upon the fall of John is not made clear. As given, the villain's excuse is even vaguer than Iago's.

any way...every way, plainly meant to balance, as, possibly, are "cross" and "bless."

62. *sure*, trustworthy. It is not necessary to depart from Q. and print a question mark after *assist me*. The sentence is assertion and question in one.

65. *the greater*. With the megalomania of the man with a supposed grievance, John imagines that everyone is talking about him, sneering at him, triumphing over him; and with the madness of impotence wishes he could poison the whole company. He is what mental science would call a paranoiac.

66. *go prove*: in the sense of "decide."

ACT II

Scene I

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In Q. there is no break, but merely the direction, *Enter Leonato, his brother, his wife, Hero his daughter, and Beatrice his neece, and a kinsman.* In F. there is a division marked *Actus Secundus*, with the same direction. The characters entering should also include Margaret and Ursula in attendance on Hero and Beatrice, for they speak later on, and there is no direction for their entrance. Observe again the presence of the non-existent "wife." In performance this would be a "full-stage" scene, prepared during the two previous "front-stage" scenes. The place is not clearly indicated—it may be a room in Leonato's house or the famous orchard in which the first scene was enacted—it does not matter which, as long as no time is lost in setting it. Probably it was the garden, to which the revellers come after the heat of the house. A garden would suit the promenading and pairing off conspicuous in the scene. The time is clearly the evening of Monday after the "great supper" mentioned in the previous scene. In spite of F.'s act-division there should be no break in performance. It has been suggested that the division into acts found in F. was made for a court performance in 1613. The "kinsman" of the direction may be Leonato's musical nephew mentioned in the former scene—or still another of Leonato's innumerable connections. He plays no part in the scene. Like the "wife" he is probably a survival.

1. *Count John...at supper.* Apparently the misanthrope had changed his mind; but the discrepancy may be due to imperfect revision.

3. *tartly*, sourly; "heart-burn" is a form of indigestion caused by too much acidity. Current advertisements will probably have made most people aware of this.

9. *my lady's eldest son.* Apparently "a spoilt child, and therefore allowed to talk constantly. See *The Puritan* (p. 264, col. 1, ed. 1685): 'To towre among Sons and Heirs, and Fools, and Gulls, and Ladies eldest Sons'" (Wright's note). In Q. it is misprinted "Ionne" instead of "Sonne"—the "Ionne" coming from "Iohns" immediately below it.

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17. *shrewd*, ill-natured, malicious.

18. *curst*, vixenish. See *Taming of the Shrew*, passim. *Shrewd* generally refers to speech and *curst* to disposition.

15. 21. *a curst cow.* In *Outlandish Proverbs selected by Mr G. H.* (1640), proverb 531 is "A curst cow hath short hornes." Wright gives a reference to Froude's *History of England* (IV. 217), which I quote in full: "The Earl said he was very hasty, and God sent a shrewd cow short horns. 'Yea, my lord,' quoth Blage, 'and I trust your horns also shall be kept so short as you shall not be able to do hurt with them.'" It is scarcely necessary to add that the usual double meaning is intended in these pleasantries.

25. *Just*, exactly, truly; as in *Measure for Measure*, V. 1:

"*Duke.* You say your husband.
Mariana. Why, just, my lord, and that is Angelo."

And later in the present play, V. 1. 160.

28. *lie in the woollen.* Sleep in rough blankets instead of smooth sheets.

35. *in earnest*, in pay, or, as a tip.

36. *berrord.* The spelling represents the pronunciation of "bear-herd" or "bear-ward"—the bear-keeper, who sometimes kept apes as well, for the amusement of our forefathers.

apes into hell. To mind apes in hell was the proverbial punishment for old maids who had evaded the duty of minding children in life. The same expression is used in *Taming of the Shrew*, II. 1, where Katherine, jealous of Bianca, exclaims:

"Nay, now I see
She is your treasure, she must have a husband;
I must dance barefoot on her wedding-day,
And for your love to her lead apes in hell."

42. *for the heavens.* A passage unnecessarily disputed and amended. The obvious meaning is that which continues the humour of Beatrice's speech—"for the heavens" being an exclamation, equivalent to "By heaven!" It is many times thus used in the literature of the period. But the words may be taken literally, Beatrice being supposed to say something like this: "When I reach hell, the devil says, 'Go away to heaven, Beatrice, this is no place for maids, this is where the husbands are!' So away I go to St Peter, and for heaven he shews me the place where the bachelors sit"—heaven being the place where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage. I think the former reading preferable—"heavens" is not very likely to mean "heaven," save as an exclamation. But on any interpretation we cannot ignore Beatrice's identification of bachelordom with heaven. Yet editors (doubtless all married) seem determined to attempt some mollification of the passage, and they re-punctuate it thus: "away to St Peter for the heavens";

—taking the phrase blamelessly as indicating her destination. But surely it is absurd to make Beatrice talk here like one of Miss Charlotte Yonge's heroines. And it is unconvincing to argue that because Beatrice, quoting the devil, says, "Get you to heaven," she would not be so profane as to use "for the heavens" immediately after as an exclamation. With the rest of her conversation before us, it is hard to know where Beatrice would have drawn the line. What seems to me most tame, flat and improbable is that she would say, "and away to St Peter for the heavens; he shews me where the bachelors sit, etc." Yet this is the reading adopted in all the modern editions. It may be noted that Story XIX of the *C. Mery Talys* describes how St Peter at the gate of heaven refuses admission to an oft-married man. The present text rejects the modern re-punctuation and follows strictly the reading of Q. and F. The comma after "heavens" does not indicate any separation from "he shews me." What it probably indicates is a little pause of emphasis after "heavens."

15. 44. *Well niece, I trust*, etc. Obviously addressed to Hero.

46. *curtsy*. Q. and F. have *cursie* all through; this was probably the current pronunciation.

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55. *wayward marl*, wilful and incalculable earth; a beautiful phrase (apart from its humorous intention here) with its suggestion that man—"this quintessence of dust"—has "erred and strayed" from the way of faith and duty.

57. *kindred*, spelt *kinred* in both Q. and F.

59. *in that kind*, in that way—i.e. the way of marriage. We have already seen that Leonato expects the Prince himself to be the wooer.

61. *in good time*, a punning allusion to the music; later we have "measure" with the meaning of "moderation" as well as its musical sense. The significance of the dance-measures alluded to is explained by Beatrice herself. A jig is a lively dance tune, usually, though not always, in six-eight time. Amateurs of music will be more familiar with the jig in the spelling "gigue," for Bach made great use of this measure—all the English and French Suites and most of the Partitas ending with a Gigue. In this he followed his English forerunners, who had included "Jiggs" with "Almands," "Corants" and "Sarabands" in their suites. A "measure" was any stately dance with a well-defined rhythm—such, for instance, as a Pavane or a Minuet. Its "ancientry" may be understood as its antique or traditional dignity. It was a courtly dance. Although

the word "measure" is very frequently used to describe a dance, no specific composition called a "Measure" appears among the numerous dance forms used by Bach and his English predecessors in their Suites. The Cinquepace (literally a "five-step") is the same as the "nimble Galliard," also referred to by Shakespeare. Its music was in triple time (e.g. three minims to the bar) and apparently the sequence of movement was a step to the left, a step to the right, a step to the left, a step to the right, and a "sault majeur" which seems to have lasted for two bars—probably a leap with a curtsy. The figure was then repeated. Elizabethan dancing was more acrobatic than our own and required a good deal of high-stepping and capering. It should be noticed that the "cinquepace" of Repentance (with his bad legs) is a pun on "sink apace"; and further, that the Elizabethan sound of "pace" (pass) is caught up in Leonato's "passing shrewdly." Sir John Davies's *Orchestra; or A Poem on Dancing* gives us some stanzas of interest in this connection:

"Under that spangled sky, five wandring flames,
Besides the king of day and queen of night,
Are wheel'd around, all in their sundry frames,
And all in sundry measures do delight,
Yet altogether keep no measure right:
For by itself, each doth itself advance,
And by itself each doth a Galliard dance.

* * * *

Not those young students of the heavenly book,
Atlas the great, Prometheus the wise,
Which on the stars did all their life-time look,
Could ever find such measure in the skies,
So full of change and rare varieties;
Yet all the feet whereon these measures go,
Are only spondees, solemn, grave and slow.

But far more diverse and more pleasing show,
A swift and wandring dance she did invent,
With passages uncertain to and fro,
Yet with a certain answer and consent
To the quick music of the instrument.
Five was the number of the music's feet,
Which still the dance did with five paces meet."

16. 61. *important*, here in the sense of *importunate*. Such a reading would be questionable were it not that Shakespeare has "Maria writ the letter at Sir Toby's great importance" (*Twelfth Night*, v. 1) where no other sense is possible.

67. *ancientry*, spelt *aunchentry* in Q. and F., and so pronounced.

16. 71. *see a church*, not merely as something large, but as something suggesting marriages.

Enter, etc. Q. has *Enter prince, Pedro, Claudio, and Benedicke, and Balthaser, or dumb John*. F. has *Enter Prince, Pedro, Claudio, and Benedicke, and Balthasar, or dumbe John, Maskers with a drum*. There are several difficulties here. To take first the most obvious, Pedro is the prince; why, therefore, the comma that divides them? The entrants include Claudio who, as far as we can tell, does not dance with anyone and does not speak till much of the scene is over. John also enters here, though he, too, does not dance (as far as we can tell) and does not speak till much of the scene is over. Indeed, for dramatic purposes, there is no reason why his entry should not be postponed to the point where he intervenes with "Sure my brother is amorous, etc." Borachio speaks here, and neither Q. nor F. marks an entry for him. He and John could very well enter together. If Claudio and John enter at the beginning, what do they do during the "promenade" and dance? Does Claudio sit in a corner and sulk? It would be like him. And who is Balthasar? We know from the Folio that he was one "Iacke Wilson," and in the play itself his only real function is to sing his song. He is, in fact, Shakespeare's first dramatic singing character; but as we shall see later, he is so indeterminate that certain words probably spoken by him in this scene are headed *Bene*. instead of *Balth*. Let us remember, too, that the *Enter So-and-So* in any scene represents (almost certainly) the *theatre* direction, not the *author's* direction: Shakespeare did not write *Iacke Wilson*, *Kemp* or *Cowley* when he meant Balthasar, Dogbery or Verges. A consideration of all these facts may help us to explain the odd stage-direction of Q. and F. We must dismiss the comma in *prince, Pedro* as a mistake. We can also dismiss as fanciful (to put it kindly) the explanation offered by some commentators that *dumb John* is so called in this scene because he was taciturn, or because the printer was trying for the Portuguese "Dom" instead of the Spanish "Don"; for if either was even slightly probable, the *or* would remain a difficulty. No definite explanation can be given: we can do no more than conjecture. I think, myself, that stage practice in this scene varied—that the pairs of dancers—Pedro and Hero, Anthony and Ursula, Benedick and Beatrice, etc., were increased, decreased or otherwise changed according to circumstances of performance. I think, in particular, that Balthasar is, so to speak, an optional character in the scene. Remember the uncertain heading of his speeches. He need not appear at this point at all: there is no connection between him and Margaret. Margaret's partner might just as well be Don

John as Balthasar. The theatre-copy of the play may have indicated that in this scene either Balthasar or John (silent) could pair off with Margaret. See, however, III. 3. 102, where the form *Dun John* is used. From *Dun* to *Dum* and thence *dumbe* is a not impossible printing-house transition. No entry at all is marked for Margaret and Ursula, so that they, too, might on occasions be dispensed with, if the scene had to be shortened. The explanation is not very satisfactory, but then neither is the matter to be explained. Of all parts of the script probably the most confused were the producer's varying directions for the appearance of the players at various performances. The old direction here is useless for a modern edition and we have therefore changed it. We have given an entry for Margaret and Ursula earlier, on the assumption that they would come in with Hero and Beatrice, and an entry for Borachio here, on the assumption that he would come in with John. We have omitted F.'s picturesque "Maskers with a drum." The men are masked; but the women (as usual in such revels) are not. Beatrice speaks openly in her own character and Benedick does not. Hero is wooed as Hero though her wooer is visored. But the men, of course, are recognised. The ability of a mask to conceal the identity of a known person can easily be exaggerated; though, by time-honoured stage convention, the mere exchange of a hat or cloak is always sufficient to make a lady take a complete stranger for her own husband.

16. 75. *friend*, lover.

82. *favour*, face—at present "cased" in its mask or visor. *God defend*, God forbid.

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84. *Philemon's roof*. An allusion to the story of Philemon and Baucis told in the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid. Philemon and Baucis were two old peasants of Phrygia, living in a poor hovel, where Jupiter and Mercury (disguised) were hospitably entertained after being driven away from the other dwellings. The grateful gods transformed the hut into a temple, of which the pair were made the long-lived priest and priestess. The *Metamorphoses* in the translation of Arthur Golding is a book that Shakespeare obviously knew; and it has been admirably suggested by Blakeway that the present lines are meant to run in the rhymed "fourteeners" used by Golding:

"My visor is Philemon's roof, within the house is Jove.
Why then your visor should be thatcht; speak low if you speak Love."

The house of Philemon is described by Ovid as thatched with straw and marsh-reeds.

17. 84. *is Jove.* Misprinted "as Love" in F. It is a tribute to the instinct of Theobald that, not knowing the Quarto, he amended the "Love" of F. to "Jove." After this speech, the Prince and Hero resume their promenade and the next pair come forward. The reader will easily follow the changes.

86. *Well, I would*, etc. As a prelude to this note of emendation let us quote exactly the text of Q.:

Bene. Well, I would you did like me.

Mar. So would not I for your owne sake, for I have many ill qualities.

Bene. Which is one?

Mar. I say my praiers alowd.

Bene [i.e. catch-word leading to next page]

Bene. I love you the better, the hearers may cry Amen.

Marg. God match me with a good dauncer.

Balth. Amen.

With a negligible difference in spelling this is exactly the reading of F. as well. Thereafter the conversation is continued for one more speech between Balthasar and Margaret, and Ursula then follows. The first appropriate utterance of Benedick is his answer to Beatrice, "No, you shall pardon me." I have (very reluctantly) followed the now traditional emendation of Theobald that assigns the speeches of Benedick (quoted above) to Balthasar. The probabilities are all in favour of the alteration. The speech-headings of plays are sometimes capriciously given, and, in their abbreviated form, might easily have been misprinted. There are obvious mistakes later on in the present play. And Balthasar, in this scene, as we have pointed out, is not important. But the strongest argument for the change is what may be called the dramatic pattern of the scene, which is simply a placid promenade of four couples. The author makes no attempt whatever at the comic misunderstandings of disguise—Donna Elvira (so to speak) does not mistake Leporello for Don Giovanni. There is no dramatic reason or justification for any breach of the rhythmic circle by an intrusion of Benedick in the wrong place with a few insignificant remarks. Margaret is later mistaken for Hero: we are surely not to imagine that she is mistaken for Beatrice as well. However, we have given the exact text in this note, and the reader can follow it if he pleases. It could be justified. Shakespeare *may* have preferred to break the even tenor of the scene with a brief misunderstanding. Benedick *may* have mistaken Margaret for Beatrice for a moment, and Balthasar *may*

have happened to be conveniently anxious and adjacent; but these things are not all probable together. Now, had Balthasar been Borachio we should have excellent reasons for keeping to the old text.

17. 96. *answered*, silenced.

97. *I know you*, etc. We now (for the first time) learn the name of Leonato's brother.

99. *At a word*, in brief; or, in a word, as modern writers often say before a lengthy periphrasis. In Q. there is no comma after *word* here, but there is one in the repetition below. We may perhaps take this as indicating a greater degree of emphasis in speech; but as in F. the position of the comma is exactly reversed, the probability is that we have nothing more than a printer's caprice—or a poet's inconsistency.

102. *so ill well*, copy his defects with such unkind accuracy.

103. *dry hand*, bony with age.

up and down, completely, in all details, as elsewhere in Shakespeare, e.g. *Taming of the Shrew*, IV. 3:

"What's this? a sleeve? 'tis like a demi-cannon:
What, up and down, carved like an apple tart?"

107. *mum*, say no more—"mum," or something like it, being the characteristic sound from closed lips.

113. *That I was disdainful*. Plainly Beatrice is speaking in her own person—an indication that she was not masked.

114. *out of the "Hundred Merry Tales,"* or, as a modern wit might complain, "that I got all my stories out of back numbers of *Punch*"; for *A C. Mery Talys* had been drawn upon for seventy-four years, the original edition having appeared in 1526. The book has a singular history. It was often quoted, yet it could never be traced until an imperfect copy was discovered by Prof. Conybeare of Oxford and reprinted in 1814. Another copy—perfect, and the only perfect copy known to exist—was discovered still later in the library at Göttingen. To modern taste anyone might reasonably object to the charge of relying upon *A C. Mery Talys* for wit. It contains one excellent story and a few good ones; but of wit not a trace.

116. *What's he?* A clear proof that Benedick was masked.

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122. *only his gift*. It is tempting to take *only* as an adjective here, the phrase being then equivalent to *his only gift is*, etc. I am sure, however, that it is an adverb. Its position is certainly adverbial, as in *Measure for Measure*, III. 1. 162: "Angelo had never the purpose to corrupt her: only he hath made an assay

of her virtue to practise his judgment, etc." The word is so much used in the plays that a general note may usefully be made about it here. Grammarians are sometimes over-anxious, not to say pedantic, about the position of *only* in a sentence. When Shakespeare writes:

"Of this matter,
Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made,
That only wounds by hearsay,"

we must not say that *only* is misplaced. It does not modify *wounds*, and it does not modify *by hearsay*; it modifies the whole statement, *wounds-by-hearsay*, and its position is not wrong. When he writes, "I will only be bold with Benedick," he does not misplace *only*, because what is modified is *the-being-bold-with-Benedick*. Even in an extreme instance, not parallel with those quoted, we can defend the popular usage. Most of those who need to make such a statement would say, "I only eat when I am hungry." This looks wrong, and apparently we should correct it to, "I eat only when I am hungry"—which, however, sounds pedantic. But is the more natural form wrong? The sentence is really a blend of two separate statements, (1) "I eat when I am hungry," and (2) "I eat at no other time." It is (2) that is represented by "only," which therefore modifies the whole statement about eating and is not wrongly placed in front of the verb. Those who wish to make a statement about eating as distinguished from drinking would not say, "I only eat when I am hungry"; they would say, "I never drink when I am hungry." There is no ambiguity in the popular form of the sentence. The adverb is really *only-when-I-am-hungry*, part of which is used before the verb and part after, as the French use *ne...que*—this is merely a rough analogy, not, of course, an exact parallel. We need suffer no grammatical pangs, therefore, when Shakespeare writes, "He only lived but till he was a man," and the Bible says, "They besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment."

18. 123. *libertines*, those who follow inclinations unrestrained by decent conventions.

the commendation, etc. This is not clear. What Beatrice probably means is something like this: "It is his wickedness rather than his wit that is enjoyed, for they all enjoy his libels upon others and resent his libels upon themselves, so that he gets both applause and detestation."

126. *in the fleet*, etc., generally explained as "in the company here; I wish he had spoken to me, that I might have told him what I think of him"; for *boarded* see Sir Toby's explanation to Sir Andrew (*Twelfth Night*, I. 3): "You mistake, knight;

accost is front her, board her, woo her, assail her." The latter part is clear; what is not convincing is the use of "Fleet" (spelt with a capital in Q., F 1, F 2, F 3) as "company." Shakespeare nowhere uses the word as a common noun except to mean a company of ships and "boarded" bears out the nautical idea. Perhaps Beatrice may be referring to the company of maskers moving up and down in the garden, their dominos bellying like sails in the breeze; but this is rather fanciful. In *Merchant of Venice*, I. I, the "argosies with portly sail" are likened to "signiors and rich burghers"; but not in the sense of personal appearance. No explanation of "Fleet" is really satisfactory. Perhaps it embodied some joke of the moment.

18. 130. *break a comparison*, an uncomplimentary comparison, of course, which he would metaphorically break against her. We still talk of "cracking a joke."

134. *the leaders*, of the dance that is then about to commence —a *contredanse* of some sort, as we gather by a later reference to the "turning." The stage-direction in Q. is that given in the text, and it implies that the dance took place on the stage, and that after the dance the company retired in the manner described in Don John's speech. In the original texts there is no direction for John, Borachio and Claudio to remain; I have, therefore, added it. Indeed, much more significant is the fact that neither Q. nor F. gives Borachio an entry. We may perhaps detect a meaning in "We must follow the leaders," and the reply, "In every good thing," for "the leaders" are Hero and the amorous Prince—amorous as Claudio's proxy. The stage-direction in F. is first, *Exeunt* and then, quite separate, and placed a line below, *Musicke for the dance*. This seems to imply that the dance takes place "off," only the music being heard: a most improbable arrangement. If that reading is adopted, the following speeches must be spoken "through" the music. Q. is better.

138. *Sure my brother*, etc. Not an easy speech to explain, with no more than the existing text to guide us. John has already been clearly told by Borachio that Hero's suitor is Claudio and that Pedro is merely a royal and persuasive intermediary. Indeed John's own readiness to interfere is confessedly due to his hatred of Claudio. One explanation offered is that his remark is a deliberate *suggestio falsi* meant to reach the ears of the only remaining "visor," Claudio, the answer of Borachio being uttered *sotto voce*. The first suspicion would thus be planted in the jealous mind of Claudio. John's later speech when he pretends to mistake Claudio for Benedick gives support to this view. But then not only does Claudio know all about the Prince's pretended amorousness: John himself knows that

Claudio knows! (see I. 3). Why then should a professional villain begin a piece of villainy by telling the victim something he knows the victim already knows? There is, I fear, no satisfactory solution of the problem that way. A more probable explanation is that Shakespeare is careless about the minor details of the plot and, having already given two inconsistent accounts of the wooing, is just as ready to give a third. I suspect (see Introduction) that Shakespeare is condensing and adapting an old play or story of wooing by proxy, and that certain inconsistent details have survived the abbreviation. Thus, John exclaims, "Come let us to the banquet," although we know that the great supper is over. It is suggested, however, that *banquet* here means a dessert or lighter portion of a meal. Thus the company has a "great supper," a dance, and then a "banquet." They were evidently hearty persons; but perhaps the second banquet, like John's speech, is a trace of some older scene imperfectly assimilated. It should be noticed that Claudio neither speaks nor dances in this important part of the scene.

18. 151. *to-night*. Sometimes explained as modifying *swore*, not *marry*. This seems to me a very proper but most improbable explanation. Either the Prince, in his avowed character of a strong and forcible wooer, did swear to be so hasty, or else Borachio, eager to corroborate his master, invents the incident as a further stimulus to Claudio's jealous rage.

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153. *Thus answer I*. Claudio at once proves himself the complete gull. He is ready to believe the worst of friend or lover at the bare shadow of suggestion, and without the least attempt at original inquiry.

158. *Therefore all hearts*, etc. An imperative, the sense being, "Use your own tongues, all hearts in love!" The "let" in the next line indicates this. The line can be read simply as a statement; but the sentiment hardly becomes a man who is love-making by proxy at his own desire.

161. *faith melteth into blood*. Blood is passion, as often in Shakespeare. The passage thus means, "Before the witchery of beauty, honour melts into a flood of passion." The thought is the same as Hamlet's, "the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is into a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness." The imagery (as Capell suggests) may have been drawn from the ancient device of making a waxen image of a person one wished to injure. Rossetti's *Sister Helen*, with its opening lines, "Why did you melt your waxen man, Sister Helen?" will occur to the

reader. But Claudio, surely, was the last man with any right to denounce the weak faith of others.

19. 163. *Which I mistrusted not.* Wright explains *mistrusted* as *suspected*; but this is contrary to the whole tenor of Claudio's speech; for he suspects everybody, and declares such breaches of faith to be of hourly occurrence. To make sense of the line as it stands, we must supply some qualification like "on this occasion"—"although I know this constantly happens, I had no doubt here." The line, it will be seen, is a foot too long; but the extra-metrical use of a concluding proper name is not uncommon.

164. *Count Claudio.* Claudio is plainly still masked.

168. *the next willow.* The willow is the traditional symbol of the jilted lover:

"In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
Upon the wild sea banks and waft her love
To come again to Carthage."
(*Merchant of Venice*, v. 1. 9.)

169. *county.* Count (as F. gives it).

what fashion. Pedantically written, the sentence would run "of what fashion will you wear the garland?"

170. *usurer's chain.* Explained variously as an alderman's or mayor's chain, a view that pessimistically assumes the identity of alderman and usurer; or as a chain actually containing some of the gold with which the usurer did business. Compare the interesting passage in Richard Whiteing's *Number Five, John Street*, describing how a London flower-girl used to buy wedding rings as a means of saving her money—rings being easily strung together and carried for safety on the body, and wedding rings being so near pure gold as to be easily negotiable. The first explanation is the more probable. Merchants were bankers too in older times.

174. *drovier*, drover, like *Drapier* for *draper* in the famous *Letters* of Swift (see Glossary). An apt comparison of Benedick's, for Claudio is apparently as ready to part with Hero as a drover is willing to sell bullocks. Nobody troubles to ascertain Hero's own view of the transaction.

178. *like the blind man.* Since Eschenberg first made the suggestion in 1778, this allusion has been fathered upon *Lazarillo de Tormes*, a popular Spanish romance resembling the later French *Gil Blas*. The encyclopedic Furness not only quotes the story of Lazaro and a blind man (a stolen sausage being "the meat"), but, after expressing a definite doubt whether this is the source of Benedick's comparison, roundly declares that "there is no jest at all resembling it in *The Hundred Merry*

Tales or in any of the numerous *Jest-Books* reprinted by W. C. Hazlitt"; and he then adds: "At the same time we must remember that *Lazarillo de Tormes* was translated by David Rowlands and has always been a popular, well-known book." Later editors have followed Furness; but he and they are quite wrong. The story does not come from *Lazarillo* and it certainly is in one of the numerous *Jest-Books* reprinted by W. C. Hazlitt, namely, the *Mery Tales, Wittie Questions and Quicke Answeres, Very pleasant to Readde*, printed by H. Wykes, 1567—a companion volume to the famous *C. Mery Talys* described in a note on p. 114. Tale cxxxi of the *Mery Tales* is called *Of the blynde man and his boye*, and it reads thus: A certayne poore blynde man in the countrey was ledde by a curst boy to an house where a weddyng was: so the honest folkes gave him meate, and at last one gave hym a legge of a good fatte goose: whiche the boy receyvyng kept a syde, and did eate it up hym selfe. Anon the blynde man saide: Iacke, where is the leg of the goose? What goose (quod the boy)? I have none. Thou liest (quoth the blinde man), I dyd smell it. And so they wente forth chidyng together, tyll the shrewde boye led the poore man against a post: where hittyng his brow a great blow, he cryed out: A hoorson boy, what hast thou done? Why (quod the boy) could you not smell the post, that was so nere, as wel as the goose that was so farre from your nose?

There was an earlier edition of the *Mery Tales* but it is much shorter than the edition of 1567 and does not contain the present story.

19. 181. *If it will not be.* The general meaning is clear, the mind supplying the words left unsaid: "if it is not to be that you will let me alone, as I ask you, I will go away myself." And he goes.

186. *base* (*though bitter*). It is Benedick who is now the "poor hurt fowl." "Base (though bitter)" sounds remarkably like "poor, but honest." What antagonism is there? If we understand "though" to be equivalent to "or rather," the difficulty vanishes; for Benedick then means something like this: "Beatrice pretends to speak for the world when she calls me 'the prince's jester'; but this is only her horrid—or rather her sarcastic disposition." It is permissible to be *bitter*, but not *base*. The reading of *though*, however, as equivalent to *or rather* is rather a violence.

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Enter the Prince. The stage-direction in Q. is *Enter the Prince, Hero, Leonato, John and Borachio, and Conrade.* F. has simply *Enter the Prince.* If John and his coadjutors enter at this point they are silent, and obviously hear nothing of what is discussed.

Leonato and Hero are also in the way. We, therefore, adopt the reading of F. See the Introduction for a full discussion of this point.

20. 192. *Lady Fame.* Rumour, "painted full of tongues," and all of them false.

193. *a lodge in a warren*, or, as we might say, a "lodge in a wilderness"; a keeper's hut, remote from company, and therefore melancholy.

207. *bestowed on you.* A bold speech for Benedick to make to his sovereign. Later, he is equally bold when he declines the Prince's company. Benedick evidently is not in the secret of the proxy wooing.

213. *quarrel to you*, towards or against you.

214. *the gentleman that danc'd.* Benedick himself, of course —as Pedro knew quite well.

215. *wrong'd*, misrepresented.

216. *misus'd*, misrepresented, mis-called.

217. *but with one green leaf*, barely alive.

221. *a great thaw.* The comparison is not apt, and certainly not in harmony with the climate of Messina. The change in our English winter from N.E. to S.W. sometimes induces languor, but hardly dulness. We may remark that Beatrice did not say anything like this in the conversation here reported.

222. *such impossible conveyance*; "convey" in Shakespeare is frequently a euphemism for "steal," and a "conveyer" is a thief. "Conveyance" is thus the unadmirable dexterity that succeeds in inflicting injuries so rapidly that the victim has no chance of retort; "impossible" is therefore a very fitting adjective and needs none of the suggested emendations. It is used again, in just this sense of "incredible," in *Twelfth Night*, III. 2, where Maria, describing the antics of Malvolio says, "no Christian, that means to be saved by believing rightly, can ever believe such impossible passages of grossness."

a man at a mark, the marker at the butts, safe from the good shots and only in danger from the wild ones.

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224. *if her breath.* Reference to foul breath is not uncommon in Shakespeare—the most ungallant being that in Sonnet CXXX:

"And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks."

Beatrice's "terminations" are her terms, her epithets, her phrases. Benedick therefore means, "If her breath were as horribly foul as her invective there would be no living in the same world with her."

21. 226. *I would not marry her*; dramatic irony, for we are sure that he will.

228. *had left him*, had given or bequeathed to him, i.e. everything.

229. *have turn'd spit*, as he turned Omphale's spinning-wheel, and endured other indignities from that Queen, who tyrannized over her mighty lover.

231. *infernal Ate*. Ate is the goddess who, as Homer tells in *Iliad*, XIX, created such strife that Zeus "seized her by her bright-haired head in the anger of his soul, and sware a mighty oath that never again to Olympus and the starry heaven should Ate come, who blindeth all alike. He said, and whirling her in his hand flung her from the starry heaven, and quickly came she down among the works of men." Here below (or lower) she became the goddess of Strife and Discord. Shakespeare makes several allusions to her. The new Ate is "in good apparel," doubtless because the original, after being whirled out of heaven by the hair of her head, might be presumed to have suffered some "disorder in the dress."

232. *some scholar*, someone who knew Latin, the only language that evil spirits recognized. "Get thee behind me," exclaims the admirable and alarmed Dominie to Meg in Chapter XLVI of *Guy Mannering*: *Conjuro te, scelestissima—nequissima—spurcissima—iniquissima—atque—miserrima—conjuro te! Conjuro, abjuro, contestor, atque viriliter impero tibi!*—but Meg merely thought it was French, a clear proof (if there were no other) that she was not an evil spirit. Benedick becomes a little confused in his excitement. What he means is this: "She makes a hell of earth, therefore I wish some exorcist would send her back to hell; otherwise, hell without her will be as quiet as a sanctuary, and people will sin purposely to go there in order to escape the discord she causes here." People have been found to take Benedick's embroideries seriously.

Enter Claudio, etc. This is the reading of F. Q. has merely *Enter Claudio and Beatrice*.

239. *the world's end*. Here in these mock-heroic flourishes of Benedick we get glimpses of the lands east of the Sun and west of the Moon, as seen by those who lived in an almost magically expanding world. It was in the year of *Much Ado*, remember, that the East India Company received its Charter. The "world's end" was further off than it had been. "Farthest from thee is best," says Benedick in effect, apostrophizing the approaching Beatrice.

240. *the Antipodes*, people rather than places, as we may see by reference to familiar lines in *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, III. 2; *Merchant of Venice*, V. 1; *Rich. II*, III. 2.

21. 241. *tooth-picker*, merely a variant of *toothpick*.

242. *Prester John's foot*. "Prester" is but old "presbyter" writ small. Purchas even calls him "Priest John," and Rabelais promised (II. 34) to tell us how Pantagruel "espousa la fille du roy d'Inde, dict Prestre Jean." Rabelais unfortunately failed to keep this promise; otherwise he would certainly have mentioned the length of that potentate's foot. Prester John has a long history and has lived in many centuries and cities. Some allege that he belongs to Abyssinia, where he reigned as a descendant of the Queen of Sheba and Solomon (whose ring he wore), his name, according to Selden, being "Belul Gian," or "precious stone," which by translation and adaptation became "Precious John" and finally "Prester John." It is unnecessary in a note to pursue Prester John in all his manifestations and through all his local habitations from Asia Minor to Far Cathay. What is highly probable is that his personality is derived from the Grand Lama of Tibet, and the legend of his Christian empire from the remarkable adventures of Nestorian Christianity in China, dating from the first missionary enterprise in the seventh century. The reader desirous of pursuing this strange story should consult Legge's *Christianity in China*, Yule's *Cathay*, and (for other aspects of Prester John) Howarth's *History of the Mongols*. Gibbon (chap. XLVII) is an easily available summary. Gibbon remarks characteristically that "the fame of Prester or Presbyter John has long amused the credulity of Europe." It certainly amused Europe in the *Travels* of the probably fabulous Sir John Mandeville, alleged to belong to the fourteenth century, for an abundance of MSS testifies to great popularity. Mandeville tells us many marvels about Prester John but notes nothing extraordinary about his feet. Marco Polo is equally silent.

243. *the Great Cham's beard*. The great Cham is the Khan or Great Lord of the Tartar hordes. "The most successful of the Tartar princes assumed the military command, to which he was entitled by the superiority either of merit or of power. He was raised to the throne by the acclamations of his equals; and the title of *Khan* expresses, in the language of the North of Asia, the full extent of the regal dignity," Gibbon, chap. XXVI. The Tartar is proverbially whiskered, and to bring a hair from some powerful monster is a traditional impossible labour—see, for instance, the story of *Kilhwch and Olwen* in *The Mabinogion*.

244. *the Pigmies*. The pygmies were "that small infantry warr'd on by cranes" mentioned in *Par. Lost*, Bk I, l. 575, and taken by Milton from *Iliad*, III: "the Trojans marched with clamour and with shouting like unto birds, even as when there

goeth up before heaven a clamour of cranes which flee from the coming of winter and sudden rain, and fly with clamour towards the streams of Ocean, bearing slaughter and fate to the Pygmy men." The Πυγμαῖοι were a πυγμή (13½ inches) tall. They were probably monkeys—as Marco Polo himself suggested. Marco Polo had been translated into English in 1579.

21. 245. *harpy*. The harpies were the fabulous creatures, half-women and half-birds, who tormented Phineus (prophet old and blind) by carrying off his food. Ariel impersonates a harpy in *The Tempest*. Beatrice was likened to a harpy no doubt on account of her virulence.

248. *my Lady Tongue*. Benedick's third coinage of the sort, the earlier two being "my dear Lady Disdain" and "Lady Fame." There are others.

251. *he lent it me awhile*. For an explanation of this see the Introduction.

255. *put him down*, put him out of countenance—as Maria did Sir Andrew.

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258. *I have brought*. This mission of hers is not mentioned in the play. It is a device to bring both her and Claudio on the stage.

265. *civil*. Observe the pun here on "Seville." Cotgrave defines *aigre-douce* as "A civile Orange, that is between sweet and sower." Shakespeare joins "sad and civil" in Olivia's description of Malvolio; but the present direct reference to "orange" leaves no doubt that a pun was intended.

266. *jealous complexion*, yellow is traditionally associated with jealousy.

267. *blazon*, a blazon is technically a coat of arms, or heraldic shield or banner; hence it is also the proper heraldic description of armorial bearings. Here, as elsewhere in Shakespeare, it means a notable description or proclamation of qualities. The touch of colour in Beatrice's speech makes the word very apt here.

268. *conceit*, fancy, supposition, imagination, as always in Shakespeare.

271. *God give thee joy*, the traditional marriage wish.

275. *all grace*, the heavenly source of grace.

276. *cue*, spelt *Qu* in Q. and F.

277. *herald*, spelt *herault* in Q. and F.

281. *Speak cousin*. The most remarkable fact about Hero is that she seems never to speak. Perhaps the constant companionship of Beatrice has reduced her to silence. Claudio, too, is scarcely gracious at such a moment.

284. *poor fool*, a term of endearment, used with almost un-

bearable pathos in Lear's dying exclamation about Cordelia. "And my poor fool is hanged!"

22. 285. *windy side*, the side from which the wind comes, and so the side of greatest tactical advantage. In boat-sailing you endeavour to get to windward of your opponent and so "take the wind out of his sails."

286. *her heart*. F. reads "my heart."

288. *Good Lord for alliance*. Probably an exclamation meaning (ironically) "Heaven send me a marriage, too." The objection seems to be that Shakespeare uses "alliance" several times, but never to mean the marriage of individuals: families or factions are allied by marriage, individuals are wedded. But, though weighty, the objection is not final. Beatrice was as likely to call herself "an alliance" as "a marriage," especially in her present mock-heroic vein. At any rate, this explanation fits the facts. Capell's view, shared by some, is that the phrase is a retort to Claudio's use of "cousin," the meaning being, "Good Lord, here have I got a new cousin." This does not sound very probable to me, nor does it fit so well with the conclusion—such as it is.

289. *to the world*. "To go to the world" is evidently a phrase for "To get married"—i.e. to follow the way of the world, to marry and beget children, something in the sense of *As You Like It*, III. 2: "I drove my suitor from his mad humour of love to a living humour of madness: which was, to forswear the full stream of the world and to live in a nook merely monastic." Later in the same play (V. 3) Audrey says: "I hope it is no dishonest desire to desire to be a woman of the world." A more striking parallel, however, occurs in *All's Well*, I. 3, where the Clown, desiring to get married, says: "If I may have your ladyship's good will to go to the world, Isbel the woman and I will do as we may."

I am sunburnt. No really satisfactory explanation of this has ever been offered. The same expression of disparagement occurs in *Tro. and Cress*. I. 3. 280, etc., where Aeneas delivers the challenge of Hector to the Greeks:

> "If any come, Hector shall honour him:
> If none, he'll say in Troy when he retires,
> The Grecian dames are sunburnt and not worth
> The splinter of a lance."

It is deserving of notice that old Nestor, in replying to the message, declares that, if no one else will take up Hector's challenge, he will,

> "And meeting him will tell him that my lady
> Was fairer than his grandam, and as chaste."

Obviously the expression means something more than that blondes were considered handsome and brunettes were not. That is certainly true; but it is only part of the truth. "Sunburnt" is the opposite of "fair" in all senses, fair in face and fair in fame. It has something like the meaning of "tarnished." Another quotation may illustrate the passage:

"*Ham.* For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a god kissing carrion,—Have you a daughter?
Pol. I have, my lord.
Ham. Let her not walk i' the sun...."

The story of Danae is also to the point. If it be objected that Beatrice was not likely to say such a thing, we can only add that it is hard to know just where Beatrice, in her expansive humour, would draw the line.

22. 290. *Heigh-ho for a husband.* Malone gives the title of an old ballad in the Pepysian Collection at Magdalene College: "Hey ho, for a Husband. Or the willing Maids wants made known." Wright quotes another allusion to it in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1651, p. 565): "Hai-ho for a husband, cries she, a bad husband, nay the worst that ever was is better than none."

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295. *Will you have me?* In Bandello's story, and in fact, Pedro was married.

299. *no matter*, no solid stuff, therefore, no sound sense.

304. *a star danc'd.* Wright says, "As the sun was supposed to do on Easter Day." The best known allusion is Suckling's:

"Her feet beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice, stole in and out,
As if they fear'd the light:
But O she dances such a way!
No sun upon an Easter-day
Is half so fine a sight."

In Sir Thomas Browne's *Vulgar Errors*, Bk V, chap. XXIII, 14 (ed. Wilkins) we read: "We shall not, I hope, disparage the resurrection of our Redeemer, if we say the sun doth not dance on Easter-day. And though we would willingly assent unto any sympathetical exultation, yet cannot conceive therein any more than a tropical expression. Whether any such motion there were in that day wherein Christ arose, Scripture hath not revealed, which hath been punctual in other records concerning solary miracles; and the Areopagite, that was amazed at the eclipse, took no notice of this."

23. 308. *by your Grace's pardon*, Beatrice's request to be allowed to leave the royal presence.

310. *the melancholy element*. The "humours" of the body, according to Elizabethan physiology, were blood, phlegm, choler, and melancholy. According as these were tempered, the corresponding dispositions were sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, and melancholic.

313. *unhappiness*. At first sight this looks like a mistake; but the meaning is, "She is so little given to sadness, that even in her dreams she laughs away unhappiness." As a modern would say, happiness predominates even in the unconscious.

317. *out of suit*. Deighton suggests that a legal quibble is used here—that she non-suits her suitors.

325. *a just seven-night*, an exact week. The word, pronounced "sennight" continued to be used quite late in the nineteenth century. The dramatic reason for the delay is given in the next speech.

327. *a breathing*, we say "a breathing space."

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331. *th'one*, "one" is pronounced like the first syllable of "only."

334. *give you direction*. There is either too much or too little here. "As I shall direct" would be enough; "as I shall give you direction" seems to lack a concluding preposition.

339. *any modest office*. Hero's remark is a little prudish—even a little uncalled-for. But the adjective serves to emphasize the shocking effect of the charge made against her.

343. *strain*, descent.

approved, tried, attested.

confirm'd, well-founded.

honesty, not, of course, in its present restricted sense, but like the Latin *honestas*, honour.

346. *practise*, play tricks or use devices, as the lord says of poor Christopher Sly (*Taming of the Shrew*, Ind. l. 36):

"Sirs, I will practise on this drunken man."

The corresponding noun is similarly used, as in *Twelfth Night*, v. 1. 360, where Olivia says to Malvolio:

"This practice hath most shrewdly pass'd upon thee."

347. *queasy stomach*, inclined to sickness; a reference to his supposed constitutional dislike of women.

Scene II

No change marked in Q. or F. "A front-stage scene...the time is either Monday, late at night, or Tuesday in the morning" (Boas). Don John and his henchmen have a chronic habit, apparently, of hearing false news, or only a misleading part of the news. Undoubtedly the clumsiest scenes of the play are those in which these improbable persons appear.

24. 1. *shall marry*, is to marry; "shall" is used with all persons in Shakespeare, and not merely with the first, as now.

3. *cross it*, thwart it.

5. *medcinable*, curative, medicinal; pronounced med-cinable. I have kept the spelling of Q.

6. *ranges evenly*, accords; *affection* means *desire* or *inclination* as well as *love*.

11. *a year since*, another little hint of "time before" in the present play.

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19. *to temper*, to mingle—see note on II. I. 310.

23. *a contaminated stale*, an unchaste woman.

25. *misuse*, deceive.

vex, a much stronger word then than now.

26. *undo*, ruin.

29. *find me*, the "ethical dative" again; Borachio means, simply, "find a fitting time to draw, etc."

31. *intend*, pretend.

32. *as in love*, etc. Q. (followed in the main by F.) reads thus: "intend a kind of zeale both to the prince & Claudio (as in love of your brothers honor who hath made this match) and his friends reputation, who is thus like to bee cosen'd with the semblance of a maid, that you have discover'd thus: etc." The general meaning is clear, but the structure is not. Capell re-punctuated the passage, his main alteration being to move the first bracket between "as" and "in" and to put the last after "maid." In Steevens (1793) it therefore appears thus: "intend a kind of zeal both to the Prince and Claudio, as—in love of your brother's honour who hath made this match; and his friend's reputation, who is thus likely to be cozen'd with the semblance of a maid,—that you have discover'd thus." That "maid" is the logical end of the parenthesis is undeniable; but what is the beginning? On Capell's interpretation (and he has been followed by most other editors), "as" becomes equivalent to "for example," and is

connected with the very remote "that you have discover'd," the meaning then being, "for example, that you have discovered thus: etc." But the question arises, how can John be said to have made this discovery in love of his brother's honour? If he had really made such a discovery, he would have made it, so to speak, absolutely, not relatively. It seems to me a much better reading to leave the beginning of the parenthesis as in Q.: "(as in love, etc." the meaning then being, "intend a kind of zeal both to the prince and Claudio, as if in love of your brother's honour, etc." But this reading leaves the dependent clause "that you have discovered thus,' apparently unconnected. Only apparently, however; for it is plainly a rhetorical repetition of "that you know that Hero loves me"—a resumption of the original form of the sentence broken by the long parenthesis. In other words, all that is needed is to understand a repetition of "tell them" before "that you have discovered thus."

25. 36. *instances*, proofs, facts.

39. *term me Claudio*. Another difficulty in a difficult passage. The obvious emendation is to change "Claudio" to "Borachio"; and Theobald first made the suggestion. On the whole it is the best solution of an insoluble difficulty. Borachio (at the plain risk of being slain by the infuriated Claudio) is quite willing that his name should be mentioned with Hero's, for the suggestion is actually made by him in the present speech. The objection to this reading is that Margaret is supposed to be innocent. Borachio declares it, Leonato, with some natural qualification, admits it, and she appears as a cheerful chatterbox, joking with Hero on the very morning of the tragedy she has helped to cause. Why, then, should she let herself be called Hero? Well, it may be observed that a lady who will let Borachio persuade her to appear at a window "at any unseasonable instant of the night," might easily let herself be called Hero in fun, and might even call Borachio Claudio in fun; for the suddenly proposed marriage between Hero and Claudio may be assumed to be the universal topic of conversation in the household. The fact is that the story is here very faulty, and no substitution of one name for another will remove the difficulties. The passage is another indication that the play was hastily written or adapted. In Bandello's story, the rejected lover Girondo employs a young man to tell Timbreo of Fenicia's infidelity, and the young man takes the precaution (which Shakespeare overlooks) of exacting from Timbreo a promise of indemnity for himself and his employer. Moreover, though another young man is dressed to impersonate the supposed gallant at night, there is no impersonation of Fenicia—there is no equivalent to Margaret in the story. Ban-

dello's tale is well-fashioned and entirely credible. The impersonation of Hero by Margaret is apparently taken from Ariosto's story, or the play of *Ariodante and Genevra* based upon it (see Introduction). But in Ariosto, Dalinda (the equivalent to Margaret) is the mistress of Polinesso (the villain), and is accustomed to admit him frequently to the house by means of a rope-ladder she lets down from a window. She is persuaded by him (though she does not clearly understand why) to come to the window one night in Genevra's clothes—Polinesso, it should be understood, being desirous of wedding Genevra, and actually using his mistress to plead his suit with her lady. This arranged, Polinesso goes himself to Ariodant (Claudio), asks the knight why he should intrude into a love-affair already settled, and arranges to give him ocular proof of the relations between Genevra and himself. Observe the difference in the stories. In Ariosto there is a guilty impersonating woman, and no impersonating man; in Bandello there is an impersonating man and no impersonating woman. Shakespeare tries to use the guilty, impersonating lady of Ariosto, and the disguised, sham gallant of Bandello, and then declares the impersonating lady innocent. The result is a tangle that cannot be set straight. The only solution is to read Borachio for Claudio, and to think as charitably of Margaret as we can.

25. 41. *I will so fashion the matter.* Nothing more is heard of this, and apparently no special importance is to be attached to the sentence.

43. *disloyalty*, specific unfaithfulness in love.

jealousy shall be call'd assurance, "suspicion shall be called certainty" (Wright). Malcolm's words (*Macbeth*, IV. 3. 29), "I pray you, let not my jealousies be your dishonours, but mine own safeties," exhibit clearly the Elizabethan general meaning as opposed to our restricted modern meaning of *jealousy*.

44. *all the preparation*, for the marriage.

45. *Grow this*, let this grow—a form of the imperative common in Shakespeare.

46. *in the working this.* A form common in Shakespeare, e.g. *Macbeth*, I. 4. 8:

> "Nothing in his life
> Became him like the leaving it."

If *working* is a participle, we should expect, "be cunning in working this"; if it is a verbal noun, we should expect "be cunning in the working of this." The Shakespearean form is a blend of both constructions; *working* is therefore a verbal noun taking an object. Abbott, *Shakespearian Grammar* (par. 93) has a long historical note on the construction.

25. 47. *ducats*. It is difficult to assign an exact value to this very Shakespearean coin. The gold ducat may be taken as something between seven and ten shillings. A silver coin known as a *ducato* (more correctly perhaps as *ducalis*) was struck in Apulia by Roger II of Sicily in 1140. It bears on the obverse a bust of Christ with the inscription IC XC RE IN AETRN (*Jesus Christus regnat in aeternum*); on the reverse the figures of Roger II and his son Roger, Duke of Apulia, standing, holding a cross, with the inscription R·R·SLE· (*Rogerius Rex Siciliae*) and alongside the cross ANRX (*anno regni decimo*). The gold ducat was first struck at Venice in accordance with the decree of 31 Oct. 1284. It bears the inscription SIT TIBI XPE DATVS QVEM TV REGIS ISTE DUCATVS—"To thee O Christ be given this duchy which thou rulest." The silver coin struck first by Enrico Dandolo in 1202 was also at first called *ducat*, afterwards *grosso*, but it does not bear the *ducatus* inscription. The name thus came from Roger's *ducatus* or duchy of Apulia, and was confirmed by the Venetian *ducatus* inscription. At least there appears to be no coin earlier than Roger's called *ducat*.

48. *Be you constant*. F. has "be thou"; Q. is obviously better.

SCENE III

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No change marked in Q. or F. "A full-stage scene as in I. I.... the time of this scene is probably Saturday evening" (Boas). The suggestion is quite sound, but there is no definite indication in the text. Plainly, several days have elapsed.

Enter Benedick alone. Thus Q. and F. The "alone," which some modern editors omit, is surely intended. We are to imagine Benedick first musing in silence. No provision is made for the boy's entry—the present stage-direction is ours; but he may be supposed to be Benedick's page, near at hand and coming when called. Boas finds in the reference to "a book" proof of Benedick's literary tastes; but as the boy never returns and is, so to speak, still searching, we must not be too optimistic about a remark that is merely a device for getting rid of the boy: Benedick desires to be alone with his apprehensive thoughts about matrimony. Why, it may be asked, is the boy introduced at all? Plainly because a little conversation, embodying the kind of quibble so loved of Elizabethans (and Shakespeare), is a better opening for a scene than a long soliloquy. Probably Benedick appeared alone, had a few moments of semi-comic gesture in

silence, and then called for the boy, who was, no doubt, an amusingly diminutive imp, like Falstaff's page. His appearance and the quibble raised a laugh and so struck the right note for the scene.

26. 5. *I am here already*. "I shall be gone and back again in an instant." In Q. and F. the *exit* is placed at the end of the boy's speech, as if Benedick's rather second-rate quibble were uttered to nobody. But Benedick's speech is a solid block of prose, and the printers would not be anxious to break it with an *exit*.

9. *behaviours*, points of bearing or deportment—such as Malvolio practised to his own shadow.

11. *argument*, subject.

14. *tabor*, small drum or tambourine. The drum and fife are martial, the pipe and tabor pastoral. Furness aptly quotes Aubrey: "When I was a boy, before the late civill warres, the tabor and pipe were commonly used, especially Sundays and Holydayes, and at Christnings and Feasts....Now it is almost lost; the drumme and trumpet have putte that peacable musique to silence."

15. *ten mile...ten nights*. It is curious how we always tend to drop the plural form in measures of distance. To this day, a carpenter carries a "two-foot rule" and is "six foot" tall; but he doesn't work for "eight hour" a day.

16. *carving*. Shaping—in his mind's eye, of course. The *doublet* was the waisted jacket of Elizabethan dress. The dandyism of the Elizabethan gallant was a constant theme of jest.

19. *orthography*. "Now he is become Orthography itself in his fantastical (i.e. fanciful) display of words"; or, "now he talks like a dictionary."

20. *strange dishes*. Shakespeare had used the same idea in *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 1, where Moth and Costard comment on the flourishes of Armado and Holofernes: "They have been at a great feast of languages, and stolen the scraps."

21. *may I be so converted*. "Is it possible I shall behave thus?" That Benedick already fears is plain from the fact that he will not admit he fears.

29. *cheapen*, offer a price for her, bid for her. The punctuation here is that of Q. It is not necessary to make changes for mere consistency's sake where the meaning is perfectly clear.

30. *noble...angel*. The names of these coins lend themselves to quibbles. See Bassanio's elaborate fantasia on "angel" in his apostrophe to Portia's picture. The two coins were worth 6*s*. 8*d*. and 10*s*. respectively.

32. *of what colour it please God*. Possibly a parallel to Viola's

arch reply to Olivia about her complexion: "Excellently done—if God did all." That Shakespeare specially disliked unnatural hair and "make-up" is evident in several passages. Perhaps Benedick's remark may be taken as indicating indifference; but I think not. He is clearly a man of taste—if not of "literary" taste.

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Enter Prince, etc. Thus Q. The direction in F. is interesting: *Enter Prince, Leonato, Claudio and Iacke Wilson*—"Iacke Wilson" obviously being the singer who played Balthasar. It seems clear from the text that Balthasar sings "off" during the first speeches, and then comes on, and is asked to sing again. The conversation here begun is one of many passages that attest Shakespeare's deep understanding of music and its power. There is no English poet who refers so often and so "knowledgeably" to the art. Like Pepys (that Shakespearean creature) Shakespeare had the instincts and affections of a musician.

36. *how still the evening is*. The corresponding passage in *Merchant of Venice*, v. will occur to the mind of every reader.

40. *the hid-fox*. An emendation not to be rejected, even though first made by Warburton. Q. and F. both read *kid-fox* and some strenuous attempts have been made to defend that reading. They are unconvincing in themselves and are surely invalidated by Hamlet's exclamation (IV. 2): "Hide fox, and all after"—a reference to the game of "hide and seek." The "penny-worth" with which Benedick was to be "fitted" was his share of the evening's amusement, namely, to be the theme of their jest.

Enter Balthasar with music, i.e. with an instrument on which to accompany his song. There is (of course) no entry in F., "Iacke Wilson" having already appeared.

42. *tax not*, etc., do not task a bad voice to do injustice twice to good music.

44. *It is the witness*, etc. "Excellence always proves itself by a depreciation of itself." This is not usual in the modern world of music.

46. *let me woo*, let me beg. Here follows one of Shakespeare's frequent verbal fantasias.

55. *and nothing*. A pun on "noting." That this was the pronunciation is clear from Sonnet XX, where "nothing" rhymes with "doting." Shakespeare used the same pun later in *The Winter's Tale*, IV. 4. 624. "Crotchets," of course, is still another pun.

56. *ravisht*, "drawn out," as well as "delighted."

57. *sheeps' guts*, the "catgut" of stringed instruments.

hale, to draw. Compare *Twelfth Night*, II. 3, where Toby says: "But shall we make the welkin dance indeed? shall we rouse the night-owl in a catch that will draw three souls out of one weaver?"

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68. *ditties*, the words of songs.

moe, more; used frequently by Shakespeare. See Glossary.

69. *dumps*, doleful tunes. The original meaning is "a melancholy state of mind," and the word is used in the singular in *Hudibras*, I. ii. 973:

"To rouse him from lethargic dump,
He tweak'd his nose, with gentle thump."

It is now, however, used only in the plural in this sense. From this meaning came the application of the word to a doleful tune, and then to any tune in general. Thus, *Ralphe Roister Doister*, II. I. 21–2:

"Then twang with our sonets, and twang with our dumps,
And hey hough from our heart, as heavy as lead lumpes."

See also Sidney, *My mistresse lowers* etc.:

"Some good old dumpe, that Chaucer's mistresse knew."

See also Peter's conversation with the musicians, *Romeo and Juliet*, IV. The word first appears in the sixteenth century and its origin is not known.

80. *the night-raven*. An admirable touch! That the raven is a bird of ill-omen is clear from many passages in Shakespeare —to say nothing of Poe's poem:

"Would I could meet that rogue Diomed! I would croak like a raven; I would bode, I would bode!" (*Troil. and Cress.* V. 2).

"The croaking raven doth bellow for revenge" (*Ham.* III. 2).

"The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements" (*Macbeth*, I. 5).

A specific "night-raven" appears to be unknown to ornithology. But what of that?

81. *Yea marry*. This speech gives colour to a stage device of conversation between Pedro and Balthasar while Benedick is uttering his comment. The word is consistently spelt *mary* in Q. Both forms appear in F. I have retained the accepted *marry*; for though Q. shows the origin (now generally known) F. gives the pronunciation, which is practically that of the French *Marie*.

28. 82. *to-morrow night*. Probably the wedding-eve, i.e. Sunday night. The time of the present scene is thus fixed.

88. *stalk on*. As the wary fowler behind his "stalking horse." The reader should have no difficulty in telling which are the asides and which the speeches meant for Benedick's ear. We have strictly followed the old texts which give no unnecessary directions.

96. *past the infinite of thought*, past even the limitless power of thought to conceive, i.e. she is "unthinkably" deep in love, as people might now say.

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101. *discovers*, reveals.

104. *she will sit you*, as Bottom "will roar you"—in the ethical dative; the repeated "you" following is obviously addressed to Claudio.

107. *I would have thought*. "Would" is taken by some as a strong asseveration—"I certainly thought"; but "would" with the first person, as the simple equivalent of "should," is quite usual in Shakespeare.

112. *gull*, used either for the deception or the deceived; here the former. See Glossary.

115. *hold it up*, keep it up, he has caught it!

125. *smock*, "chemise à femme" (Cotgrave)

128. *told us of*. So F.; "told of us" in Q.

130. *the sheet*, the sheet folded into two.

132. *That*, that's so.

133. *a thousand halfpence*. The silver halfpenny of Elizabeth was a very tiny coin.

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139. *prays, curses*. Halliwell-Phillipps suggested a transposition of these words. It is hardly necessary.

142. *ecstasy*, literally, the being beside herself with passion. Spelt *extasy* in Q. and F. See Glossary.

149. *alms*, a singular noun. In Chaucer it is "almesse." Here it means a good deed in a general sense. Q. and F. spell it *almes*. There is something to be said for a retention of this spelling, which is general in Shakespeare.

154. *wisdom and blood*, reason and feeling—the "blood and judgment" of Hamlet's speech to Horatio, III. 2.

157. *her guardian*. Beatrice is parentless in the play.

158. *dotage*, extremity of fondness.

159. *dafft*, etc., put aside all considerations of my rank. The Pedro of fact was married to the daughter of Manfred. See Introduction. For the word see Glossary.

30. 170. *contemptible*, contemptuous. Not a regular use. "A contemptible spirit" here means "a spirit that makes him contemn or despise." The passage is similar (but not exactly parallel) to one in Gibbon (*Extraits Raisonnés de Mes Lectures*, Works, v. 286): "I read Emmius, p. 54–194, the end. It is a short, and consequently a dry abridgment; but it is concise, clear and exact. It contributed a good deal to confirm me in the contemptible idea I have always entertained of Cellarius."

172. *outward happiness*, he is fortunate in his handsome appearance.

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175. *wit*, wisdom.

178. *he avoids them*, etc., apparently not meant for open depreciation; but in this speech and the next we seem to be listening to Dogbery and Verges.

189. *with good counsel*, probably not advice from others, but her own better judgment.

196. *dinner is ready*. Dinner, in Elizabethan times, was usually a noonday meal. But Shakespeare has already told us it is now evening—an inconsistency due to imperfect revision.

202. *and no such matter*, and it is not so.

203. *a dumb-shew*, because each would be afraid to speak first. A "dumb-shew" (as we know from *Hamlet*) was a preliminary miming of a spoken scene to follow.

205. *sadly borne*, seriously carried on.

207. *their full bent*, are stretched to the utmost, like a bow in making a shot.

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213. *their detractions*, hear their defects described.

215. *reprove it*, disprove or deny.

218. *odd quirks*, misapplied phrases and scraps of sarcasm.

219. *broken*, like lances in a tiltyard. See note to V. I. 135.

222. *sentences*, maxims, "wise saws," *sententiae*.

223. *career*, the charge of a horse in a tilting match.

It is worth noting how the tone of this excellent speech changes characteristically from gravity to gaiety. Its frank manliness prevents our confusing Benedick with (say) Malvolio, similarly gulled by a false report of love.

236. *choke a daw*, merely an emphatic and picturesque conclusion to the phrase.

withal, the form usual when "with" closes the utterance. Compare Shylock's "To bait fish withal!"

237. *no stomach*, no appetite.

239. *a double meaning*, i.e. I was sent against my will, because I wished to come of my own accord.

ACT III

Scene I

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There is no break in Q. F. has the heading *Actus Tertius*. A full stage scene—the place being the same as that of the preceding scene, namely the garden or "orchard." The time is the day following—the afternoon of Sunday. Technically the scene is difficult, as it is in essence a repetition of the scene before—the "gulling" of a concealed hearer by a feigned story of love. The reader will notice at once how admirably Shakespeare evades the monotony of mere repetition. We have a change from prose to verse, from broad comedy to romance. Beatrice interposes no remarks like those of Benedick. The note is lyrical, rising at the end to something like passion. In these two scenes Shakespeare conveys with quiet understanding a sense of the tragic difference noted in Byron's familiar lines:

> "Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,
> 'Tis woman's whole existence; man may range
> The court, camp, church, the vessel, and the mart;
> Sword, gown, gain, glory, offer in exchange
> Pride, fame, ambition, to fill up his heart,
> And few there are whom these cannot estrange;
> Men have all these resources, we but one,
> To love again, and be again undone."

Ursley. So Q. in the heading and in l. 4, where the scansion appears to need a dissyllable. Elsewhere she is Ursula. We have kept the old and pleasing inconsistency. "Beatrice" is also dissyllabic or trisyllabic as the lines require.

1. *Good Margaret*. It is startling to find that Hero's first words to the girl who was to play such a tragic part in her life are "Good Margaret."

run thee. "Thee" is reflexive, as in the corresponding French *va-t-en*.

parlour. The line should be read as if "Margaret" occupied the time of two syllables and "parlour" of three—"Margret" and "par-le-our." It is interesting to note that Cotgrave's Dictionary gives *Parleor* as a variant of *parloir*.

3. *Proposing*, conversing; an unusual use, not paralleled elsewhere in Shakespeare, who always uses "to propose" as a transitive verb. Among the definitions of the noun *propos* Cotgrave gives "talk, speech, discourse, chat, conference." See the word "propose," in l. 12. See Glossary.

33. 7. *the pleached bower*, already referred to in I. 2. It is difficult to see why Wright declares definitely that they are not the same. This is attaching too much importance to Anthony's phrase "mine orchard" in the earlier scene. Surely we are not to imagine that all members of Leonato's numerous family have their own gardens replete with "pleachëd bowers." For the word see Glossary.

9. *like favourites*, etc. There is no need to seek particular application of these lines to contemporary persons. The fact is common enough to have become a generality.

12. *our propose*, our talk (*propose* = Fr. *propos*). F. reads *purpose*—less happily for us, as the modern accent falls in the wrong place.

14. *presently*, immediately.

16. *trace*, pace.

23. *That only*, etc. See note on II. 1. 122 for position of the adverb. The sense is "that wound by mère report."

24. *like a lapwing*. "Far from her nest the lapwing cries away" (*Comedy of Errors*, IV. 2), and she runs close to the ground in the neighbourhood of her nest, to conceal its position, for, like the lark's, it is built on the ground. The image is Shakespearean in its vividness; but see the quotation from Lyly in the Introduction.

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30. *woodbine*, here identified with the honeysuckle, as it is in Lyte's *Niewe Herball* (1578): "Woodbine or Honeysuckle hath many small branches whereby it windeth and wrappeth it selfe about trees and hedges....This herbe...is called...in Englishe Honysuckle, or Woodbine, and of some Caprifoyle." In *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, IV. 1, "the woodbine" and "the sweet Honisuckle" appear to be distinguished, the former being apparently (and wrongly) identified with the bindweed or convolvulus.

36. *haggerds of the rock*, wild hawks. See Glossary.

45. *as full as fortunate*. So Q. and F. There is no need for any of the numerous emendations suggested. "As full as fortunate" is an entirely intelligible phrase, a little colloquial in form. It means "just as fortunate." No ordinary person hearing it would find any difficulty in it. The meaning of the whole passage is: "Does not Benedick deserve to have a mate just as attractive as Beatrice is?"

52. *Misprising*, undervaluing, despising. Cotgrave gives *Mesprisant: A contemning, despising, disesteeming, neglecting, heedless of.*

58. *lest she'll*. Q. has "lest sheele," F. "lest she." "Lest"

followed by "will" apparently occurs nowhere else in Shakespeare.

34. 60. *rarely*, finely, well.

61. *spell him backward*, turn all his quibbles into defects, as witches make good prayers evil by saying them backwards.

63. *black*, dark, especially dark-bearded.

antic, something grotesque, extravagant, absurd; the "blot" was no doubt his beard. Q. spells it *antique*.

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65. *agot*, so spelt in Q. and F. The agate stone was used for seals, and the figures cut on it were naturally tiny. See Glossary.

70. *simpleness*. Used only once by Shakespeare in a slighting sense (*Romeo and Juliet*, III. 3. 77); on the other hand "simplicity" nearly always has the meaning of "folly" or "stupidity."

purchaseth, acquire by right, not (as now) by money. Steevens quotes a striking parallel to this speech from Lyly's *Euphues*, 1581:

"If one be hard in conceiving, they pronounce him a dowlte: if given to studie, they proclaim him a dunce: if merry, a jester: if sad, a saint: if full of words, a sot: if without speech, a cypher: if one argue with him boldly, then he is impudent: if coldly, an innocent: if there be reasoning of divinitie, they cry, *Quae supra nos, nihil ad nos:* if of humanitie, *sententias loquitur carnifex*."

Again: "if he be cleanly, they [women] term him prude; if meene in apparel, a sloven: if tall, a lungis: if shorte, a dwarfe: if bold, blunt: if shamefast, a cowarde, etc."

It has been suggested that Shakespeare here had these passages in mind; it is quite possible; but Shakespeare had observed women at least as closely as Lyly.

71. *commendable*. A strong accent falls on the first syllable and a lighter on the last but one, as in the familiar lines:

> "'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
> To give these mourning duties to your father."

72. *odd, and from all fashions*. *Odd* is unusual, eccentric, not normal, not sorting with other things, as in *Love's Labour's Lost*, V. 1, "He is too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd, as it were." See Glossary. *From all fashions* has much the same meaning—something deliberately different from the usual. *From* in the sense of *contrary to* is quite Shakespearean.

76. *press me to death*. The punishment called *peine forte et dure*. "Such fellons as stand mute and speake not at their arraignement are pressed to death by huge weights laid upon a boord, that lieth over their brest, and a sharpe stone under their

backs, and these commonlie hold their peace, thereby to save their goods unto their wives and children, which if they were condemned should be confiscated to the prince" (Harrison, *The Description of England*, Bk II, chap. xi).

35. 79. *a better death, than die*. F. has "a better death, to die," an inferior reading; "than die" is of course "than [to] die."

80. *tickling*, three syllables, as if it were "tickle-ing."

84. *honest slanders*, slanders that will not arraign her honour or virtue. J. C. Smith observes, "There is some irony here. Hero herself is to be the victim of slanders by no means honest."

86. *impoison*. Cotgrave: "Empoisonner, to poyson, impoyson."

90. *pris'd*, esteemed.

96. *for bearing*. Both Q. and F. omit the comma after *bearing*. This is obviously a mistake.

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101. *every day to-morrow*. An odd expression to us, though the form was not unusual in Shakespeare's time. It is merely a way of saying "I shall be a married woman when to-morrow is past." The occasion is not very serious, otherwise we might be tempted to see in Hero's words a fervent simplicity in keeping with her character. To her, if not to Claudio, marriage was serious. What appears to me even stranger than Hero's answer is Ursula's question. The wedding-day had been fixed nearly a week before. Is it possible that one of Hero's own waiting-women did not know the date of her mistress's wedding? To suppose that the question doesn't mean anything and is intended only to change the conversation doesn't help us. A silly question would be more likely to arouse the suspicions of Beatrice than to allay them. And Hero answers seriously if enigmatically. Altogether, the household of Leonato is very remarkable.

102. *some attires*. As F. S. Boas remarks, special attention seems to be drawn to Hero's garments, which play a tragic part in the sequel.

104. *limed*, caught like a bird with bird-lime. The reading of F., "She's tane," has nothing to recommend it. Bird-lime is a sticky substance made from hollybark or mistletoe and smeared upon trees to entangle the feet and wings of the fowler's victims.

105. *goes by haps*, by chance rather than by destiny.

106. *with traps*, in continuation of the bird-catching image. Q. marks no exit, but the rhyme indicates it. We have inserted the *exeunt*.

107. *What fire*. Observe the rhyming stanza form here used.

The scene thus closes on a lyrical note. The "fire in her ears" is the traditional ear-burning of those who are talked about "behind their backs."

36. 110. *behind the back*. An obvious meaning is that when people talk about you "behind your back," it is not your pride and contempt that they praise—if they praise at all. A somewhat loftier meaning is that pride and contempt (to which young people are generally addicted) are easy qualities, neither good in themselves nor the outward effects of any noble inward endowment. The latter sense suits the passage better.

112. *Taming my wild heart*. The imagery of the caged wild-bird is continued in this beautiful line.

116. *better than reportingly*, "I know it on surer ground than report, for my heart is already yours."

Scene II

"A front-stage scene. The time is Sunday, soon after the preceding scene" (Boas). The place may be anywhere, indoors or out.

1. *consummate*. In Modern English we almost invariably use the form in -ed, in participle and adjective alike. For the form, see note to I. I. 123.

2. *toward Arragon*. These speeches of the Prince and Claudio are not meant seriously. The point is that the Prince is going to tease Benedick by asking that newly-repentant bachelor to accompany him—at the very time when Benedick will want to refuse.

3. *I'll bring you*, I'll escort you.

7. *only be bold with Benedick*, only venture to ask Benedick's company. Position of *only* as before.

10. *cut Cupid's bow-string*, "spiked his gun" or "put him out of action"—to vary the metaphor.

the little hangman, the little rogue, the term is no more to be taken literally than "little devil" applied to a lively and adventurous boy; but some have been quite serious about it.

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17. *truant*, observe the punning succession of *true* and *truly*.

23. *hang it first*. Criminals were "hanged" and then "drawn," i.e. disembowelled. Deighton very aptly quotes Middleton's *The Widow*, IV. I. 108:

"*Martino*. I pray, what's good, sir, for a wicked tooth?
Ricardo. Hang'd, drawn, and quartering."

37. 26. *Where is*, where [there] is.

a humour or a worm. Furness quotes Batman *uppon Bartholome, His Booke De Proprietatibus Rerum* (1582), where in *Liber quintus*, cap. 20, we read: "The cause of such aking is humors that come doune from the head, eyther up from the stomacke, by meane of fumositie, either els by sharp humours, and beating in the gums: and then is sore ach felte with leaping and pricking, through the mallyce and sharpnesse of the humours....Also sometime teeth be pearced with holes and sometime by worms they be changed into yelow colour, greene, or black....And if Wormes be the cause, full sore ache is bred; for they eating, pearce into the subtill, and make the teeth to ake, and grieve them very sore...." And again (*Lib. sept.* cap. 25): "Wormes breede in the cheeke teeth of rotted humours that be in the holownesse thereof....Wormes of y^e teeth be slaine with *Mirre* and *Opium*." I have extended Wright's quotations. On the whole, the science of this is not so fanciful.

27. *every one cannot master a grief.* Pope amended *cannot* to *can*, the sense being, "it is easy for those who haven't a pain to show the one who has how to bear it." But the original reading can be defended, as meaning, "No one can master a grief but the one who has it"—the sense being, "your advice is entirely superfluous, not to say useless, it is only the sufferer who can conquer his sufferings." Readers will probably prefer the amended and simpler *can*.

30. *fancy...fancy.* In two different senses, the first being love, that fantasy of the imagination, and the second a whim or fantastical caprice.

31. *strange disguises*, one among many hits at the Englishman who borrowed fashions from all countries and wore them tastelessly and incongruously. Everyone will remember Portia's description of the young baron of England who came to woo her. The most striking parallel in this connection is to be found in Dekker's *The Seven Deadly Sinnes of London*: "For an Englishmans suite is like a traitors bodie that hath beene hanged, drawne, and quartered, and is set up in severall places: the coller of his Dublet and the belly in *France*: the wing and narrow sleeve in *Italy*: the short waste hangs over a *Dutch* Botchers stall in Utrich: his huge sloppes speaks *Spanish*: *Polonia* gives him the Bootes: the blocke for his heade alters faster then the Feltmaker can fitte him, and thereupon we are called in scorne *Blockheades*. And thus we that mocke everie Nation, for keeping one fashion, yet steale patches from everie one of them, to peece out our pride, are now laughing-stocks to them, because their cut so scurvily becomes us." (Quoted from Furness, who gives

other parallels from Lodge's *Wit's Miserie* and Fynes Moryson's *Itinerary*.) Wright quotes Harrison's *Description of England* and Lyly's *Euphues*.

37. 32. *or in the shape...no doublet*. F. omits these lines—doubtless by design, for James I was king in 1623. His daughter Elizabeth married the Elector Palatine of the Rhine in 1613, and he was cultivating the friendship of Spain. The Scottish King of England might not have seen the joke.

34. *slops*, loose, baggy breeches. No doubt a contrast is intended between the thick, heavy German and the spare, slender Spaniard—all legs and no body.

36. *no fool for fancy*, "not a fool on account of love (as you say)—unless it be love of this dandiacal excess."

44. *tennis-balls*. Steevens quotes Nashe's *A Wonderfull Strange and miraculous Astrologicall Prognostication*, etc. (1591): "they may sell their haire by the pound, to stuffe Tennice balles." Henderson quotes *Ram Alley* (1611): "Thy beard shall serve to stuff those balls by which I get me heat at Tenice."

47. *civet*, a musk-like perfume obtained from the *Viverra civeta*, the civet-cat. See *As You Like It*, III. 2. 66–9. In the *Epilogue to the Satires* Pope calls dandies "courtly *civet-cats*," and Cowper in *Tirocinium* (829, etc.) refers to

> "Fops at all corners, lady-like in mien,
> Civeted fellows, smelt ere they are seen."

49. *sweet*, a play on "scented."

51. *The greatest note*, etc. Q. gives this speech to Benedick. An obvious mistake, which F. corrects.

52. *to wash his face*, to use "washes" for his face—as (in the next line) he is supposed to use "colour." We are not to suppose that Benedick was hitherto unaccustomed to the use of water. Furness quotes Greene's *A Quippe for an Upstart Courtier*: "His head being once drest [by the Barber] which requires in combing and rubbing some two howers, he comes to the bason: then beeing curiously washt with no woorse than a camphire bal, he descends as low as his berd and asketh whether he please to be shaven or no."

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56. *a lute-string*, his jesting spirit is now embodied in the melancholy of a lute-string, the lover's instrument; it is now kept in check, and subject to "stops"—an obvious pun. The "stops" or "frets," were the marks on the finger-board of a lute, indicating where the fingers of the left hand should be put to shorten the string for higher notes. The modern banjo has

a marked finger-board, but the violin has no "stops," though we still speak of "double-stopping." The repetition of the word "now" seems awkward, and a suggestion has been made that "now governed" should be read "new-governed." Boas, however, points out very justly that if one *now* is to be changed to *new* it ought to be the first. Actually, no change is necessary; the sentence is exclamatory, and the second *now* is merely a repetition—the phrases are not alternative or successive. F. omits one *conclude* in the next speech.

38. 62. *Yes, and his ill conditions.* The "yes" is not assent, but dissent, or rather emphasis—"It *is* one who knows him, and all his bad qualities, and is ready to die for his sake, in spite of them all."

64. *buried with her face upwards*, continues the idea of "dies" for him. The "face upwards" has unnecessarily exercised the wits of many editors. The meaning is fairly obvious. Malone had no doubt about it. See II. I. 255–9.

65. *Old signior*, to Leonato. A stage device to leave Claudio and Pedro the sole repositories of John's disclosure.

67. *hobby-horses*, these frivolous fellows. The "hobby-horse" figured in morris-dances, and other festive shows. Fasten round yourself a wicker framework made roughly in the shape of a horse's body; let there be something like a horse's head in front and a tail behind, and draperies all round, like the gorgeous trappings of a decked-out steed (to conceal the actor's possession of two legs instead of four), and you will be able to prance about furiously to the amusement of the younger spectators. Such was the "hobby-horse."

70. *Hero and Margaret.* It was Ursula, not Margaret. The substitution is probably no more than a slip, and has no sinister meaning.

71. *the two bears.* Beatrice and Benedick—creatures sure to quarrel at sight.

74. *Good den.* Good evening. Various forms appear—*gooden, godden, good e'en.* Thus in *Romeo and Juliet*, I. 2, Romeo says, "Godden good fellow," and the Servant replies, "Godgigoden!"

83. *discover*, reveal.

86. *aim better at me*, attempt a better estimate of me.

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91. *circumstances shortned*, an "absolute" participial construction: "unnecessary details being omitted."

98. *paint out*, depict, represent, or simply to paint, as in *The Epistle Dedicatorie* to Harrison's *Description of England*:

"rather than with vaine affectation of eloquence to paint out a rotten sepulchure."

39. 102. *entred*. According to Borachio's story in the next scene the window was not actually entered. There is an entry, however, in Ariosto and Bandello.

103. *if you love her, then*. Punctuation of Q. and F., altered by Hanmer and succeeding editors to "if you love her then,"—quite unnecessarily.

107. *If you dare not*, etc. If you cannot believe what you see, then keep silent.

112. *to-morrow in the congregation*, etc. Many editors have decided that the punctuation is wrong, but they have not decided unanimously what punctuation is right. The Cambridge editors (the only ones we need cite) insert a comma after *to-morrow*. All we need say is that the punctuation in the text is that of Q. and F., that it is quite intelligible (and even intelligent), and that no deletion, insertion or alteration of any kind is needed.

119. *untowardly*, adversely, perversely.

SCENE III

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A full stage scene, the place being a street, with a penthouse or projecting roof under which the watch may shelter, and a bench in the church porch upon which they may sit down. The time is past one o'clock on Monday morning, and the night is very dark and wet. Dramatically the scene is excellent in itself and in its contribution to the total effect: the spectator can endure the painful incidents of the repudiation scene because he knows that the malefactors are already apprehended and that explanation and atonement cannot be far away. For Dogbery and Verges see the Introduction.

3. *suffer salvation*, i.e. damnation. We give the probable equivalents of the Constables' utterances. The sublimer fatuities defy annotation.

5. *allegiance*, the opposite is meant.

7. *give them their charge*, as a judge "charges" a grand jury by declaring their duties.

9. *desartless*, the opposite.

10. *constable*, i.e. active constable in charge, not Dogbery, the "right maister constable."

11. *George Seacoal*, not Francis Seacoal who appears later, and is probably the double officed Clerk and Sexton.

40. 15. *comes by nature*, one of Dogbery's most delightful *clichés*.

17. *master Constable*. Q. has full stop; but the utterance is plainly left incomplete by Dogbery's interruption.

21. *no need*, another absurdity, but solemnly amended by Warburton to *more need*.

24. *comprehend*, apprehend.

vagrom, vagrant.

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35. *tolerable*, intolerable.

36. *We will rather sleep*, etc. This and the next eight "Watch" speeches are not definitely assigned. In both Q. and F. they are simply headed *Watch*. It is not until the exclamation, "We charge you in the prince's name stand" that the differentiation into "Watch 1" and "Watch 2" is resumed. Editors usually assign them all to "Watch 2," who seems to be the intelligent one; but we have here followed the vagueness of the original. Readers and producers can therefore make what assignment they wish.

40. *your bills*, tall staves with axe-heads to them. Johnson's note (1765) is interesting: "A bill is still carried by the watchmen at Lichfield. It was the old weapon of the English infantry, which, says Temple, gave the most ghastly and deplorable wounds."

55. *they that touch pitch*. "He that toucheth pitch, shal be defiled therewith, and hee that hath fellowship with a proude man, shall be like unto him" (Ecclesiasticus, xiii. 1).

57. *steal out of your company*. A pun that Shakespeare used again when he made Pistol (*Henry V*) say, "To England will I steal, and there I'll steal."

60. *much more*, much less.

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72. *present*, represent—not necessarily a Dogberyism.

74. *birlady*, by our Lady.

76. *statutes*. So in Q.; F. has *statues*, a tempting Dogberyism. No one can decide if it is a misprint or an emendation. Readers must take their choice. I think it should be *statutes*. Dogbery would know an official word like that. The old army sergeant might call *regulations* "reggerlations"; but he would be unlikely to say "relegations."

80. *Ha ah ha*. As Furness remarks, this is not mere merriment, but a chuckle of triumph over Verges, who now admits what he formerly denied.

42. 82. *keep your fellows' counsels, and your own.* "Dogbery uses the very words of the oath administered by the Judge's marshal to the grand jury at the present day" (Lord Chancellor Campbell).

88. *coil*, disturbance, fuss, trouble; a word used several times by Shakespeare, and later in the present play.

89. *vigitant*, vigilant.

90. *Borachio.* Here follows an admirable sketch of a partially intoxicated man exhibiting the curious obstinacy, both logical and quarrelsome, common in that condition.

94. *Mass.* By the Mass; many times used in Shakespeare in spite of changed times.

my elbow itcht, as a sign that wickedness was near. "The fiend is at my elbow," says Launcelot Gobbo, in *The Merchant of Venice*, and the second Witch of *Macbeth* exclaims:

> "By the pricking of my thumbs,
> Something wicked this way comes."

95. *scab*, used with a double meaning, literally, and metaphorically for a low fellow. Wright quotes a parallel play on the word from *Coriolanus*, I. I. 169:

> "What's the matter, you dissentious rogues,
> That, rubbing the poor itch of your opinions,
> Make yourselves scabs?"

98. *Stand close*, in concealment.

99. *like a true drunkard.* As Furness remarks, *In vino veritas.*

102. *Don John*, printed *Dun John* in Q. Perhaps the *dumbe John* of II. I arose from *Don* pronounced as *Dun* by reading-boy, heard as *Dum* by compositor, and set up as *dumbe.*

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106. *so rich*, the question repeated—with a change in the point of view: villainy is "dear" (costly) to the one who pays, and "rich" (profitable) to the one who receives. Borachio then answers the question by saying, "Yes, villainy can certainly be profitable (or rich) because when rich villains have to employ poor ones, the poor ones can put a high price on their services."

110. *unconfirm'd*, unpractised, not yet accustomed in the ways of rascality.

111. *the fashion of a doublet*, etc., the drunken man here becomes (as drunken men will) both obstinate and incoherent. He is obstinate because he is bent on trying to connect the notion of changing garments according to fashion with the fact of the actual change of garments made by Margaret that night: i.e. he is trying to play upon *fashion* = *mode*, and *fashion* = *form*;

and he is incoherent because he is too little master of himself to make these connections. What he is endeavouring to say is possibly something like this: "People don't care what form (or fashion) their garments take as long as they are fashionable. When fashion demands, they will instantly and easily change the form of their clothes. Well, all that has happened to-night is that somebody has changed the fashion (form) of a few garments."

43. 113. *Yes it is apparel.* Conrad apparently means, "Yes, it is something to him: it is clothing." But Borachio insists on "fashion" because a glimmering of the double meaning is shedding its uneffectual fire upon his fuddled brain.

116. *a deformed thief*, a disfiguring robber of men's natural appearance. "Deformed" for "deforming" appears in one other place:

> "O, grief hath chang'd me since you saw me last,
> And careful hours with time's deformed hand
> Have written strange defeatures in my face."
> (*Comedy of Errors*, v. 1. 297.)

118. *that Deformed.* For "Deformed" or "Amorphus" see Introduction. Q. and F. have no capital here; later they have, when the name is used. We have therefore altered it in this place.

124. *how giddily a turns.* Borachio catches the idea from the vane.

126. *reechy*, foul, begrimed. What painting Shakespeare had in his mind we cannot tell. Many altar-pieces are "reechy," indeed, at the present day from a few centuries' exposure to the smoke of church candles. But it is possible that Borachio, who uses contemptuous adjectives freely here, simply uses "reechy" (=dirty, disgusting) as a modern would use "rotten," without any precise meaning. For the word see Glossary.

127. *like god Bel's priests.* See *The History of the Destruction of Bel and the Dragon* in the *Apocrypha*:

"Now the Babylonians had an Idol called Bel, and there were spent upon him every day twelve great measures of fine flowre, and fourtie sheepe, and sixe vessels of wine....

Now the Priests of Bel were threescore and tenne, besides their wives and children."

We do not know what "old church-window" told the story of Bel's priests.

128. *the shaven Hercules.* Hercules is nearly always represented in manhood as thickly bearded. Warburton suggested that Samson was meant; but Samson's famous weapon was not a club. Here again we have a reference to some tapestry picture

of which we know nothing. One commentator is certain that it must have been a representation of Hercules dressed in female clothes and spinning for Omphale; but in that legend it is nowhere suggested that Hercules was shaven. Indeed, the point of the transformation would be lost if he were, as Sidney points out, when discussing how delight and mirth can go together: "Yet I deny not, but that they may goe well together, for as in *Alexanders* picture well set out, wee delight without laughter, and in twenty mad Anticks we laugh without delight: so in *Hercules*, painted with his great beard, and furious countenance, in womans attire, spinning at Omphales commandment, it breedeth both delight and laughter." One famous and familiar "shaven Hercules" is not a picture but a statue—the great bronze figure in the Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome.

43. 132. *shifted out of*, as out of a garment.

136. *she leans me*, the ethical dative.

139. *possessed*, told, informed, as elsewhere in Shakespeare; but also, surely, with a further meaning—possessed by his evil influence.

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142. *they Margaret*. F. has "thy Margaret," which some prefer.

155. *lechery*, treachery.

158. *wears a lock*, a "love-lock." Furness quotes many authorities in a long note to which the curious may refer. Perhaps the most striking contemporary allusion is in Greene's *Defence of Connycatching* (1592): "Is there not heere resident about London, a crew of terryble Hacksters in the habite of Gentlemen, wel-appareld, and yet some weare bootes for want of stockings, with a locke worne at thayr lefte eare for their mistresse favour, etc." There is a suggestion in many references that the wearing of a lock indicated a slightly raffish or disreputable person. Hence the Watch's exclamation.

163. *Never speak*. Q. and F. both print this as Conrad's speech: "Masters, never speake, we charge you, let us obey you to go with us." Theobald first made the excellent emendation here adopted; "obey" is simply Dogberian for "command." It is not Dogbery who speaks, but his henchmen have a portion of his spirit.

165. *We are like*, etc. A succession of puns, which J. C. Smith aptly summarizes thus: "*commodity* = (1) goods, (2) a bargain, a handful; *taken up* = (1) got on credit, (2) apprehended; *bills* = (1) bonds, (2) halberts."

167. *in question*, another pun: (1) a questionable or doubtful bargain; (2) a suspicious bargain, likely to be questioned in law.

Scene IV

"A front-stage scene. The time is almost five o'clock on Monday morning" (Boas). The time is fixed by l. 30. The conversation between Hero and Margaret suggests that Shakespeare, like Francis Feeble, must have been a woman's tailor. Hero, it may be observed, is downhearted and Beatrice apprehensive. Margaret is either extraordinarily callous or extraordinarily obtuse.

44. 6. *rebato*, at first the wire support or "shape" of a ruff or collar, and then the ruff itself—as here. Cotgrave gives: "*Rabat*, a Rebatoe for a woman's ruff; also, a falling band."

were better, would be better.

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8. *'s not so good*. The omission of the pronoun represents the rapid movement of conversation.

12. *the new tire*, a feminine adornment—a head-dress, apparently made of hair. Fynes Moryson speaks of "Gentlewomen virgins" wearing "caps of haire that is not their owne."

within, in another room off the stage.

14. *the Duchess of Millaine's gown*. What "Dutchesse of Millaine?" At the date of *Much Ado* there was no such person. How far Shakespeare knew the romantic story of the Visconti and their supplanters the Sforza in Milan, from Francesco I (1401–1466) the first Duke, son of the *condottiere* Giacomuzzo Attendolo (nicknamed Sforza), to Francesco II (1495–1535) the last Duke, could be more appropriately discussed in *The Tempest*, where usurpation in Milan is the first postulate of the story. Two of the Sforza duchesses are famous in art and story, the brilliant Beatrice d'Este, wife of Ludovico il Moro, and Christina of Denmark, wife of the last Francesco. The names of both are attached to famous pictures. A beautiful and familiar profile portrait in the Ambrosiana at Milan was long catalogued as Beatrice d'Este by Leonardo da Vinci; but later criticism calls it Bianca (Ludovico's daughter, not his wife) by Ambrogio di Predis. Beatrice and Ludovico, in sculpture, lie side by side on their tomb in the Certosa. The portrait of Christina by Holbein is one of the finest things in our own National Gallery; but it represents, not the child-bride, but the child-widow. The entry of Christina into the city as a bride of sixteen in the spring of 1534 caught the fancy of Renaissance Milan. "Christina's

blue dress (we are told) matched the colour of her eyes, and she seemed more like a vision than a human being." Was this Shakespeare's duchess? After the death of Francesco II in 1535 the duchy of Milan was merged in the vast possessions of Charles V, who gave the dukedom to his son Philip—Philip II of Spain, an ill-omened figure to Englishmen. Shakespeare's allusion is therefore rather puzzling. Why should he refer to a non-existent Duchess of Milan at all? The description of the gown, though puzzling, is so particular that we suspect some contemporary piece of nuptial splendour ("Oh, that *exceeds* they say"—*exceeds*, not *exceeded*). We cannot guess why he should have mentioned Milan. That city which, in *The Tempest*, he endows with sea and shipping at its very gates, may have been to him a vaguely distant region, like Illyria or Bohemia, where anything romantic might happen.

45. 16. *exceeds*, excels. See *Pericles*, II. 3. 16:

"In framing an artist, art hath thus decreed,
To make some good, but others to exceed."

17. *a night-gown*, apparently not what is now understood by that name, but a gown worn over the actual bed-dress, when the sleeper rose. The clearest parallel is *Macbeth*, V. 1:

"Since his majesty went into the field, I have seen her rise from her bed, throw her night-gown upon her, etc."

Thus she sat and wrote. Beatrice, as will be seen from II. 3, was less particular—and inhabited a land less chilly. Night-gowns were generally made of silk or satin faced with fur. They were important enough to be mentioned in wills and inventories. See *Shakespeare's England*, chap. XIX.

in respect of, compared with.

18. *cloth a gold and cuts*, cloth with threads of gold interwoven. The "cuts" were perhaps what is called a "scallop-edging"; or perhaps the "slashes" familiar in the slashed doublets of the period. A cloth-of-gold doublet from Whaddon, now at South Kensington, has two cuts, about twelve or eighteen inches long, on each shoulder, giving the effect of strapping. Possibly these may have been the "cuts." The traditional costume of "Joey" the clown in the old-fashioned Harlequinade is a white doublet, breeches and hose, slashed with red. A "dublet of peche collered satten al over covered with white cut worke," and "a dublet of sad tawny satten covered with white cut worke" were among the presents made to Queen Elizabeth on New Year's Day (*Shakespeare's England*, chap. XIX).

lac'd, braided.

19. *down sleeves, side sleeves*. This passage has caused com-

mentators much trouble. The earlier interpretations tended to drop a comma after *pearls*, and take "down" as indicating where the garment was "set with pearls." Some take it so still. The "side sleeves" are comparatively easy. Furness assembles the quotations of several commentators showing that side sleeves were large open, hanging sleeves. Thus, Laneham's account of Queen Elizabeth's entertainment at Kenilworth Castle mentions that the minstrel's "gooun had syde sleevez dooun to midlegge." Within the "side sleeves" were close-fitting sleeves (like cassock sleeves within surplice sleeves) that came down to the wrist, and it is suggested that these were the "down sleeves." It may be so; but the expression has not been found elsewhere. No one seems to have connected "down" with plumage. Possibly "down sleeves" were sleeves edged with "down." The point, though disputable, is unimportant. "Side sleeves" hanging from the shoulder are clearly shown in the picture of Queen Elizabeth given as the frontispiece to vol. I of *Shakespeare's England* and in the Plate facing p. 86, vol. I (*ib.*).

round underborne with a bluish tinsel, either an underskirt, or a lining, stiff enough to carry out and display the beauty of the gown, and perhaps showing in front where the gown was open.

45. 20. *quaint*, choice, almost "smart"—certainly with very little of its modern meaning.

28. *Clap's into 'Light o' love,'* "to clap into" is "to strike into" or "to begin quickly," as in *Measure for Measure*, IV. 3: "Truly, sir, I would desire you to clap into your prayers; for, look you, the warrant's come." Margaret's speech is addressed to Beatrice, and "Clap us into" simply means "Then strike at once into," the "us" being another example of the ethical dative: the sense is clear without it, as in all other examples. The tune of "Light o' Love" is known. It is a lively measure, printed in Chappell's *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, where it appears in three-eight time. What matters, here, however, is not the tune but the words, or rather the repeated phrase. Here is a stanza as given by Chappell—obviously a later version:

"By force I am fixed my fancy to write,
Ingratitude willeth me not to refrain:
Then blame me not, ladies, although I indite
What lighty love now amongst you doth reign.
Your traces in places to outward allurements,
Do move my endeavour to be the more plain:
Your nicings and ticings with sundry procurements,
To publish your lighty love do me constrain."

29. *without a burden.* The burden or "drone" was borne by male voices. For the most accessible example of a drone, see

Sumer is i-cumen in. The punning reference to what has gone before should be obvious.

45. 31. *hey ho*, a sigh.

33. *H*, that is, "ache"—the noun being pronounced with the *ch* soft, the verb with the *ch* hard, the distinction still preserved in "speech" and "speak." Barron Field quoted the following lines from *Wit's Recreations* (1640):

> "Nor hawk, nor hound, nor horse, those letters *hhh*,
> But *ach* itself 'tis Brutus bones attaches."

34. *turn'd Turk*, become a renegade from your former profession of man-hater.

35. *sailing by the star*, the almost unchanging Pole Star being an emblem of constancy. The whole exclamation means: "Well, if you are not in love after all, there's nothing certain in this world!"

36. *trow*, I trow, I wonder.

41. *I am stufft*, I have a cold, etc.

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45. *professt apprehension*, made a speciality of quick wit.

46. *you left it*, ever since you gave up apprehension—i.e. gave up having wit enough to understand when tricks are played on you.

49. *in your cap*, something worn in the cap was meant to be noticed—as Fluellen's leek.

50. *this distill'd carduus benedictus*, "this" in the sense of "this notorious"—*carduus benedictus* being plainly the fashionable remedy that everybody talked about. Wright says: "The virtues of this plant were well known to the old herbalists." Steevens refers to *The Haven of Health* (1558) by Thomas Cogan, in which there is a chapter (46) "Of Blessed thistill." "*Carduus benedictus*, or blessed Thistell so worthily named for the singular virtues that it hath....Howesoever it be used it strengtheneth all the principall partes of the bodie, it sharpeneth both the wit and the memorie, quickeneth all the senses, comforteth the stomacke, procureth appetite, and hath a speciall vertue against poyson, and preserveth from the pestilence, and is excellent good against any kind of fever....For which notable effects this herbe may worthily be called *Benedictus* or *Omnimorbia*, that is a salve for every sore." Furness quotes Joseph Hunter's *New Illustrations*, etc., to the effect that it was specially good for the heart. Hence the aptness of Margaret's recommendation. Galatea in *Philaster* recommends it to Pharamond: "Your only remedy...is, in a morning, a cup of neat white wine brewed with carduus" (II. 2).

46. 54. *some moral*, some hidden meaning.

56. *you may think*, etc., this gabbling speech proceeds on the well-known plan of saying what it professes not to say. But surely Margaret is too voluble. Beatrice must indeed have "left apprehension" if she failed to see that she was being fooled.

64. *he eats his meat without grudging*; "he is resigned to the common lot of man—he has come to it, like all the rest; and as for you, well, you are no more than a woman!" The more obvious meaning, "In spite of his heartache, his appetite is still good," does not fit the case.

68. *Not a false gallop*; the "false gallop" was the technical term for a motion that was neither a trot nor a gallop. Margaret indicates that she means what she says. Thus Margaret, who helps to spoil the marriage between Hero and Claudio, comes very near to spoiling the match between Beatrice and Benedick.

69. *the prince, the count...are come*. The cool of the early morning has not abated their rash and unworthy purpose of the night before. To resolve this public shame in hot blood may be pardonable; to pursue it in cold blood is not. And what were "all the gallants of the town" doing, when they let a "foreigner" from Florence insult the daughter of their own governor?

Scene V

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A front-stage scene. Time: early on Monday morning. Incredible as it may seem, this scene, both delightful and necessary, has often been cut out of ordinary modern productions of the play.

the Headborough. Verges. For the Headborough see the Introduction.

2. *some confidence*, conference; *decerns*, concerns.

10. *blunt*, sharp.

11. *honest as the skin*, etc. Furness suggests that this proverbial phrase arises from the custom of branding criminals on the forehead. It may be so.

15. *odorous*, odious.

palabras. From the Spanish *pocas palabras*, few words. Why should Dogbery break out into Spanish? Because, as Steevens observes, the phrase had been given currency in *The Spanish Tragedie*, where it appears in III. 14:

> "What new device have they devised, tro?
> *Pocas palabras!* Milde as the lambe!
> Ist I will be reveng'd? No, I am not the man."

47. 17. *tedious*. Dogbery takes it as a compliment, but what he imagines it to mean we cannot say, nor could the printer of F., for he altered *pound* to *times*.

19. *the poor duke's officers*, "poor Duke" indeed! but Dogbery means "the Duke's poor officers"—understanding "Duke" as Prince or ruler.

21. *bestow...of your worship*, "of" where we should say "on" is quite Shakespearean. See Abbott, *Shakespearian Grammar*, par. 175. Compare *Taming of the Shrew*, IV. 1. 72, where we have a reference to riding "both of one horse"; 1 *Hen. IV*, II. 4. 127, where Falstaff exclaims "A plague of all cowards"; *Merry Wives*, I. 4. 80, "He came of an errand"; etc. etc. See below, "an two men ride of a horse."

J. C. Smith suggests very plausibly that the use of "o" indifferently for "of" and "on" assisted the interchange. To-day "I'd" stands indifferently for "I had" and "I would."

23. *a thousand pound*. F. has "a thousand times."

24. *exclamation*, outcry, complaint.

29. *excepting*, etc. Verges' politeness makes him accuse Leonato of being "an arrant knave."

33. *when the age*, etc. Dogbery's happy variation of "when the ale is in, the wit is out."

34. *a world to see*, a marvel, or something worth seeing—as in *Taming of the Shrew*, II. 1. 313.

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35. *God's a good man*, another proverbial exclamation, roughly equivalent to "All's right with the world." Dogbery's speech is a tissue of such sayings, and no special meaning need be sought for.

43. *comprehended*, apprehended.

aspitious, suspicious.

47. *suffigance*, sufficient; Dogbery, like Mrs Quickly, seems to have contributed something to the immortal peculiarities of Mrs Gamp.

49. *A Messenger*. No entry is marked for him in Q. or F.

52. *Francis Seacoal* a "learned writer," but not necessarily the George Seacoal of an earlier scene. True, George also could read and write. They were obviously a gifted family. No doubt Francis is the "Towne Clearke" and Sexton of IV. 2.

54. *to examination*. F. has "to examine."

56. *here's that*, "For I have that within," as another philosophical character of Shakespeare's observed.

57. *to a non-come*, probably a Dogberian blend of *non plus* and *non com.*, an abbreviation of *non compos mentis*.

48. 58. *excommunication*, examination?

59. *gaol*. The student may care to note that the word is here spelt "Iaile," and "Gaole" at l. 53, both in Q. and F.

ACT IV

Scene I

A full-stage scene. Time: immediately after the last. The place is a church. Q. has no break whatever. F. has *Actus Quartus* with no indication of place. This is the dramatic church scene to which Shakespeare has sacrificed a good deal of probability. It has no parallel in Bandello or Ariosto.

1. *only to*, to the main point at once.

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19. *not knowing what they do*. F. omits—probably by accident. See Introduction for a possible metrical reading of these lines.

20. *Interjections*, used punningly of Claudio's exclamations, and of exclamations in the grammatical sense—part of the old definition being given. Hunter says: "Shakespeare had been anticipated in this ludicrous mode of applying the language of the grammar. It occurs in Lyly's *Endymion*, where Sir Tophas says, 'An interjection, whereof some are of mourning: as eho, vah!'"

22. *father*, not merely a touch of dramatic irony, but meant by Claudio as a word of contempt—"You who are in such haste to make yourself my father."

28. *render her again*, understood metaphorically by all but Claudio and Pedro, who, of course, mean it literally.

29. *learn*, teach, as often in Shakespeare.

34. *authority*, guarantee.

35. *withal*, used (as noted earlier) when the preposition closes the sentence, the normal order being, "O with what authority, etc."

36. *modest evidence*, evidence of modesty.

38. *she were*. The subjunctive, grammatically unnecessary, is a fine literary touch, with its implication of doubt and supposition.

40. *luxurious*, in a bad sense, as elsewhere in Shakespeare—"wanton," "loose," "lascivious."

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43. *Not to knit*; "approved" is written in full, both in Q. and F., and is plainly meant to be trisyllabic:

"Nót to knít my soúl to an appróved wánton."

44. *in your own proof*, "proof" in Shakespeare sometimes means "example," as in *Measure for Measure*, III. 2. 31:

"Nay, if the devil have given thee proofs for sin,
Thou wilt prove his."

And in *Merchant of Venice*, I. I. 144: "I urge this childhood proof," etc. Thus, "if you in your own proof" means "if you in your own example," "if you yourself."

48. *You will*, printed in full in Q. and F.—a "double up-beat."

49. *extenuate the 'forehand sin*, "mitigate the sin of anticipating marriage"; but according to very general custom in olden times, the formal betrothal was warrant enough, and "sin" would therefore be too hard a word.

50. *large*, free.

52. *Bashful sincerity*, etc. As noted in the Introduction, Claudio and Hero never once appear alone together. They are the least lover-like lovers in Shakespeare.

54. *I will write against it*. "I will denounce it as false to all the world." Observe the whole of this speech with its glut of rhetoric. What evidence has Claudio for all this? Even if he had proof of a deed, he had none of character.

55. *Dian in her orb*. Diana, the type of chastity, was also identified with the moon—"Queen and huntress, chaste and fair."

60. *so wide*, so extravagantly.

66. *True, O God*, not in reply to Benedick, but a heartbroken echo of Don John's "these things are true." Benedick's ejaculation must be read as an "aside," or a whisper to Beatrice, if the antiphony of "true" is not to be spoiled.

67. *stand I here*. The reply to Leonato's question, "do I but dream?"

71. *move one question*, put or propose one question—"move" for "put" or "propose" is still the form in debates and public meetings.

72. *kindly*, natural, according to "kind."

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77. *answer truly to your name*, obviously an echo of Hero's "catechising," the first question of the Catechism being "What is your name?"

80. *Hero itself*, that is, the name. Borachio's confession shows

how the name *Hero* had been played with at that midnight interview.

51. 83. *if you are a maid,* if you are innocent you can give a satisfactory answer.

85. *are you no maiden,* your denial proves your guilt, for we know you did so.

90. *liberal,* in a bad sense—licentious.

91. *Confest*; when and where had this confession been made? It is not mentioned elsewhere. And no one asks who or where he is, or challenges the preposterous charge of "a thousand" secret interviews. Not until v. I, does Leonato discover who the villain is. It does not occur to this remarkable father to ask.

97. *thy much misgovernment,* thy licentiousness, irregularity.

104. *Conjecture,* suspicion. Claudio's eyes (and ears) seem already furnished with a sufficiency.

107. *Hath no man's dagger.* What Leonato needed was not a dagger, but a sensible woman—the absent, excised "Innogen, his wife." We are surprised that Beatrice is so long in recovering her spirited self.

109. *Come let us go,* neither Q. nor F. marks the *exeunt* of Pedro, Claudio and John.

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117. *wherefore should she not.* This question of the Friar is worth remarking as the first sensible utterance of the scene.

120. *printed in her blood,* the father interprets his daughter's blush of indignation, decency and natural shock as evidence of guilt.

124. *the rearward of reproaches,* a lovely phrase spoilt in F. by being printed "reward."

125. *I had but one,* but one child.

126. *at frugal nature's frame,* at frugal Nature's disposition or order of things. "Frame" for "framing" occurs a little later in this very scene, l. 187.

131. *smirched.* F. (less happily) has "smeered." Wright reminds us that participial phrases of this kind (the *ablative absolute* in Latin) are not uncommon in Shakespeare.

134. *But mine, and mine I loved.* The comma after *mine* appears in F. but not in Q. Otherwise the texts are alike. The reading of F. is an improvement. The extent to which we have re-punctuated the passage can be best shown by a quotation of the original from Q.:

> "But mine and mine I loved, and mine I praisde,
> And mine that I was prowd on mine so much,
> That I my selfe, was to my selfe not mine:
> Valewing of her, why she, O she is falne, etc."

That is: "the beggar's issue is not 'mine'; but the real 'mine'—she that I loved, and praised, and was proud of, she who was so much 'mine' that my own self seemed unimportant to myself, so highly did I value her,—why she, O she, etc."

Such forms as "proud on" for "proud of" and "valuing of" for "valuing" have already been noted.

52. 138. *that the wide sea*, so that, etc.

141. *Sir, sir, be patient*. This is printed in Q. thus:

"Sir, sir, be patient, for my part I am so attired in wonder, I know not what to say."

The Friar's speech below is printed thus:

"Heare me a little, for I have only bin silent so long, & given way unto this course of fortune, by noting of the lady, I have markt, G. [signature] A [catch-word]."

The Friar's lines are at the very bottom of p. 49 of Q. and have an appearance of being unduly crowded. Even sheet-signature G and the "catch-word" of the next page, "A," are printed on the same line as "have markt." Moreover, there are thirty-nine lines of text on this page, and thirty-eight in a few of the others, the normal number being thirty-seven. P. 49 is the beginning of sheet G. For some printing-house reason—perhaps an insertion in the text somewhere, or perhaps a necessity for fitting these pages on to something already set up—an extra quantity of matter had to be crushed into this single page, and space was found by printing Benedick's interposition and the beginning of the Friar's speech *as prose*. There is a technical note in the Facsimile Quarto (1886) to which the reader may refer. It was seen very early that the speeches quoted are metrical, and they are therefore printed here in the probable lines. See further below. Here again we probably have signs of revision.

142. *so attired in wonder*, so wrapped in wonder.

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146. *No truly*. In Q. this is printed, "No truly, not although, etc."; in F., "No truly: not although, etc." The modern practice is to print "No, truly, not; although, etc." or, "No, truly not; although, etc." Is this necessary?—is it even desirable that definite, doubly authorised punctuation should be changed? The "not" before "although," awkward as it is, seems to me to introduce a strong negative-adversative of the "not-but-that" type—an emphasis of the difference between the two statements, the sense being, "Last night I was not; but observe the opposite fact: until last night, etc." The charge, remember, refers not merely to one night, but to "a thousand"; and

Beatrice, in emphasising the falseness of the general charge, is really weakening the plausibility of the particular. Borachio himself had mentioned a "twelvemonth." I therefore retain the original punctuation, and feel sure that it is right.

53. 148. *Confirm'd, confirm'd.* Leonato, it will be observed, clings to the one doubtful charge, ignoring the thousand just decisively confuted.

152. *Washt it*, the subject "he" is understood.

153. *Hear me a little.* The arrangement of this speech into lines is discussed above. Most editors agree in finding the beginning obscure. There seems to be something omitted:

> "Hear me a little,
> For I have only bin silent so long,
> And given way unto this course of fortune,"

and then we expect something like,

> "That I might seek to remedy your woe."

The Cambridge text, arranging the lines differently, boldly indicates a lacuna:

> "Hear me a little; for I have only been
> Silent so long and given way unto
> †This course of fortune...
> By noting of the lady I have marked
> A thousand, etc."

One cannot be dogmatic upon such a matter, but it seems to me that the Cambridge barring of the lines is much less good than the older arrangement adopted here. And is there really a lacuna? The difficulty, such as it is, appears to lie in the word "only" and in the phrase "by noting of the lady." The simplest solution is to take them together: "I have been silent so long only through noting of the lady." We have already discussed Shakespeare's habit of separating *only* from the special phrase to which it seems attached. The separation here is hardly greater than in

> "I do know of those
> That therefore only are reputed wise
> For saying nothing." (*Merchant of Venice*, I. I. 95–7.)

Upon any interpretation, "by noting of the lady" is awkward: it joins on with "I have marked" just as uneasily as to "I have only been silent so long." Taking the passage as it stands both in Q. and F., and with only one change in punctuation, we can read it thus: "Now hear me, for I have only been silent so long, and allowed events to take their course unchecked, through watching the lady. I have observed many signs of innocence, etc." The one alteration we have made is to change the comma

after *lady* into a full stop—no violence at all, as commas where we should use full stops abound in Q., as any page of the present text will show. Those who are uneasy about the remoteness of *only* and read it as an adjective—"For I alone have been silent, etc."—would interpret the passage substantially as we have done. Personally, I think *only* is not an adjective here. Those who believe there is a lacuna read, "Now hear me, for I have only been silent so long, and allowed events to take their course unchecked [for reasons given in an omitted passage]. In watching the lady I have observed many signs of innocence, etc."

The reader has now all the important facts before him and can choose which reading he prefers. Nothing, of course, is certain—not even that the original text is wrong. It may be observed against those who believe there is a lacuna, that, crowded as the last three lines of p. 49 are in Q., there is still room on the last line for at least ten more words, especially if the sheet-signature G were moved up nearer to the catch-word.

53. 159. *beat away*. Q. reads "beate away," F. "beare away." The former is better—the sense being that the blushes (taken as a sign of guilt) have been beaten back by the whiteness of innocence.

160. *a fire, To burn*. A professional image. The Friar has in his mind's eye some contumacious heretic being purged of his errors at the stake.

164. *Which with experimental seal*, etc., which with the seal of long experience attest the truth of what I have read. It is contrary to the general imagery of *seal* and *warrant* to read "zeal" for "seal."

165. *tenour*. Q. spells it *tenure*.

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184. *the very bent of honour*, "bent," used often by Shakespeare, is an archery term. It may mean direction, or, extent of stretch. The latter meaning is better here—"Two of them are men with the fullest stretch of honour."

186. *practice*, used in a bad sense.

lives, some prefer to read *lies*; but *lives* is thoroughly Shakespearean.

187. *in frame of villanies*, in framing villainies.

192. *my invention*, pronounced in four syllables (probably something like "in-ven-si-oon").

193. *Nor Fortune*, etc. Bandello's Lionato is a poor man.

194. *my bad life*, a bad life; the form seems to make Leonato say the opposite of what he means.

54. 195. *But they shall find*, etc. Editors (beginning with Capell) have found these lines un-Shakespearean, chiefly on account of the jingle of "find," "kind" and "mind," and have proposed (or accepted) certain alterations. We can only say that the lines as printed in Q. and F. (the sole authorities) make perfect sense and not very imperfect sound. We propose to keep them unchanged.

200. *the princess* (*left for dead*). Q. has "the princesse (left for dead)"; F. "the Princesse (left for dead)." This has been emended to "the princes left for dead," on the ground that Hero was not a "princess." But surely Hero was as much a princess as Claudio was a prince. The punctuation and printing in Q. and F. seem to me too deliberate and purposed to be a misprint. I therefore retain the original reading. The broken structure of the sentence (*anacoluthon*) is exactly parallel to:

"Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,
That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
Let him depart; his passport shall be made,
And crowns for convoy put into his purse."

(*Henry V*, IV. 3. 34.)

203. *ostentation*, not in its present derogatory sense. It means the appropriate funeral ceremonies and customs.

207. *shall...will*, "What *is destined to result* from this project? What does this project *intend to do* for us?" (Abbott's paraphrase).

209. *remorse*, general pity as well as particular regret.

212. *She dying*. Fenicia in Bandello seems to be actually dead and is believed to be. She does not revive till her body is washed for burial.

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218. *rack the value*, stretch, exaggerate the value. The term s, unhappily, familiar in "rack-rent"—rent stretched to the utmost possible extent.

222. *Th'Idaea*. As Boas remarks, this is almost a Platonic use of the word. It is printed "Idaea" in Q. and capitalized in F. We retain (platonically) the spelling of Q.

223. *his study of imagination*, into the reflections or ruminations of his mind.

226. *moving delicate*, never to be separated by a comma, as some editors prefer! If we must insert a stop at all, let it be a hyphen.

227. *eye and prospect*, immediate and ultimate vision.

229. *in his liver*. This organ, now the mere theme of advertised remedies, was once looked upon as the seat of love, courage

and other noble affections. Allusions to it are frequent in Shakespeare.

55. 232. *success*, that which follows.

237. *Will quench*, etc., discussion about her sudden death will stop discussion of the charge against her.

240. *reclusive*, cloistered.

religious, conventual.

243. *inwardness*, intimacy. This is a frank and manly speech of Benedick's.

247. *Being that*, etc. This construction is not used in Modern English. The suggested parallel with *seeing that* cannot be maintained.

I flow. It has been suggested that *float* would suit the context better; but there is no need for the change; the word "flow" equally suggests unusual ductility or docility, which is just the idea conveyed by the speech.

250. *strain the cure*, the old doctrine that desperate diseases need desperate remedies is referred to more than once by Shakespeare.

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252. *prolong'd*, postponed. Note that the end of this scene is marked by the emphatic rhymes of a quatrain, with a line of extra length for the last.

253. *Lady Beatrice*. The beginning of a new scene, without change of place or passage of time. It is possibly the finest scene of the play. We have discussed it fully in the Introduction. The only point that calls for comment here is the fact that Beatrice does not go out with the fainting Hero, as we should expect. Probably she moves to go out, and Benedick detains her. She is willing to be detained, for she needs his help.

256. *You have no reason*. A smile through the tears! *freely* is no doubt a pun—(1) *copiously*, (2) *by my own desire*.

263. *but not yours*. This is not meant as a taunt. The quarrel cannot be Benedick's, for he is unconnected with Hero's family and is attached by old ties to Pedro and Claudio. The quarrel cannot be his—unless new ties bind him to Beatrice. See Introduction.

266. *As strange as*, etc., "as strange as—oh, I know not what!" Beatrice confesses in her denial; and then turns hastily back for safety to the tragedy of the morning.

270. *By my sword*. A prophetic exclamation, anticipating with dramatic irony the demand that was to be made of that weapon.

271. *and eat it*. F. has "do not sweare by it and eat it,"

possibly because the printer saw "sweare by it" in the line below. "Do not swear and eat it" is generally explained as "Do not swear and then eat your words," i.e. unsay them. I doubt whether this is the meaning. I think the meaning is the obvious one, "Do not swear by your sword and then eat it"; for Benedick immediately replies, "I will swear by it [my sword] that you love me, and I will make him eat it [my sword] that says I love not you." Surely no one doubts that in the latter speech both the words *it* refer to *sword*? "To eat a sword" is to be defeated, to be thrashed. Thus in *Antony and Cleopatra*, III. 13. 198–200, Enobarbus says, foreseeing the end:

"A diminution in our captain's brain
Restores his heart: when valour preys on reason,
It eats the sword it fights with."

In *Troilus and Cressida*, II. 3. 225, etc., Ajax exclaims: "An all men were o' my mind, a should not bear it so, a should eat swords first." In 1 *Hen. IV*, V. 4. 153, etc. Falstaff says: "I'll take it upon my death, I gave him this wound in the thigh: if the man were alive and would deny it, zounds, I would make him eat a piece of my sword."

What Beatrice means, then, is, "Do not swear and then have to eat steel as a beaten man"; i.e. "the last word about my loving you is surely with me!" Benedick replies, "I will swear by my sword that I love you, and I will make any fellow eat it who denies that you love me." It seems to me that the quip is lost if we take "and eat it" to mean "eat your word." That is what Beatrice goes on to say next. "Are you sure," she asks, "that you won't recant the words you have said?" Beatrice means to take Benedick and his sword seriously. The reader will observe how wonderfully the climax is prepared, step by step.

56. 277. *God forgive me.* Like Benedick, we ask "What offence, sweet Beatrice?" I think she means "God forgive me all my past follies of speech and thought! [I, too, love, and love deeply]." Benedick interrupts her with "What offence?" and she replies, "You have interrupted me at the most propitious moment, for I was going to declare that I, too, love, and love deeply."

281. *And do it.* Then do it.

285. *Kill Claudio.* This famous utterance raises the level, not merely of the scene, but of the whole play. It is what all readers and spectators have been saying in their hearts for a long time.

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290. *nay I pray you.* It is clear that Benedick seizes her hand to detain her.

57. 299. *bear her in hand*, delude, deceive her. Furness quotes Elwin very aptly here: "In the 14th of Eliz. 1572, an Act was passed against 'such as practise abused sciences, whereby they bear the people in hand that they can tell their destinies, deaths, etc.'"

301. *uncover'd slander*. Both Q. and F. print here "and then with publike accusation uncovered slaunder, unmittigated rancour?" It is difficult to see the meaning. If we put a comma after *accusation* we get an exclamation left naturally incomplete. In Q. and F. the incomplete name lower down is printed "Beat?" The mark of interrogation is often used as a mark of exclamation. *Uncover'd* here means *stark, bare, published*.

311. *a goodly Count*, count in its literal sense, and metaphorically as a count in an indictment—one of Shakespeare's very happy puns.

Count Comfect, "Lord Lollipop" as Staunton has happily paraphrased it. F. spoils the phrase by omitting the repeated word "Counte" and reading, "a goodly Count, Comfect." Cotgrave gives *comfets* for *dragées*. Some editors have strained at a comfit in trying to establish some association of sound or idea between *Count* and *Comfect*. There is none.

314. *curtsies*, as already noted, the word is spelt *cursies* in Q. and F.—the pronunciation being thus indicated. The meaning is, that, instead of manliness, we have only femininity.

315. *trim ones*, very smooth tongues, ready to boast or lie or flatter.

319. *by this hand*, his own; seven lines lower, Beatrice's.

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325. *I am engag'd*, I am pledged to fight.

Scene II

No break indicated in Q. or F. A front-stage scene. Time: later in the same day. Time enough must elapse for news of Don John's flight and Hero's supposed death to be known. The place may be imagined as the Constable's room in the gaol. We have added the stage-direction as to place, and retained the stage-direction of Q. as to persons, though the headings of the speeches are not in accordance with this. Thus, there is no "Towne Clearke" among the speakers. The one intelligent "porochial officer" introduced here into the play is called throughout "the Sexton," and he is plainly treated with deference. No doubt (as we have suggested) he was a pluralist, and

delegated the mere manual duties of a sexton to another. We assume that he is the Francis Seacoal whose presence (with pen and inkhorn) Dogbery desires at the examination (III. 5. 52). The whole scene is a tangle of identities. Some speeches are headed by the names of the characters, others by the names of the actors; at least one speech is telescoped into another, so that the utterances of two different persons are blended. Here is the opening of the scene as given in Q.:

Enter the Constables, Borachio, and the Towne clearke in gownes.

Keeper. Is our whole dissembly appeard?
Cowley. O a stoole and a cushion for the Sexton.
Sexton. Which be the malefactors?
Andrew. Mary that am I, and my partner.
Cowley. Nay thats certaine, we have the exhibition to examine.
Sexton. But which are the offenders? that are to be examined, let them come before maister constable.
Kemp. Yea mary, let them come before mee, what is your name, friend?
Bor. Borachio.
Ke. Pray write downe Borachio. Yours sirra.
Con. I am a gentleman sir, and my name is Conrade.
Ke. Write downe maister gentleman Conrade: maisters, do you serve God?
Both. Yea sir we hope.
Kem. Write downe, that they hope they serve God, etc.

Dogbery is obviously the first speaker; but why is he called "Keeper"? The answer is this: the part of Dogbery was "created" (as they say professionally) by the famous comedian Will Kemp, whose name, as "Kemp," "Kem." or "Ke." heads the speeches of Dogbery throughout the scene. As the scene clearly shows, the play was printed in 1600 from a theatre copy. No doubt the first speech had "Ke." written against it, and this the printer expanded into "Keeper" (the gaol idea being in his mind), and overlooked or ignored his blunder. The second speech belongs to Verges, whose part, played by Richard Cowley, is headed "Cowley" or "Couley" throughout the scene. One speech headed *Const.* is plainly his, and the simplest explanation is that the abbreviation *Cou.* for "Cowley" in MS. was interpreted by the printer as *Con.* for "Constable." We have already explained the identity of *Towne clearke* and *Sexton*. One speech headed *Constable* in full is almost certainly Dogbery's, who, after all, was the "right maister Constable." The fourth speech, headed *Andrew*, is a difficulty. Who was

"Andrew"? His alacrity in blundering, together with the echoing answer of Verges, make it almost certain that the speech should be given to Dogbery; and editors from Rowe onwards have assigned it to him. A possible suggestion is that it is a speech by one of the two Watchmen, played by some "Andrew." Against this must be set the strong objection that the Watchmen do not begin to speak till they are bidden later in the scene, and a minor objection that there is no "Andrew" in the list of the "Principall Actors in all these Playes" included in F. On the whole, then, it is best to assume that the speech is Dogbery's, and that "Andrew" is a slip of the theatrical pen, or a survival. At the risk of repetition we shall refer to some of these points again in their proper place.

58. 5. *the exhibition to examine.* Steevens suggests that this is the old man's blunder for "the examination to exhibit."

12. *sirrah*, used to inferiors, or with intent to annoy, as when a modern addresses another as, "I say, you, sir!" Conrad therefore protests indignantly that he is a gentleman, and not to be "sirrahed."

16. *Both.* This speech and the beginning of the next are omitted in F., no doubt to avoid over-use of the name of God—allowed in 1600, but penalized in 1623.

19. *proved...thought*, a Dogberian reversal.

24. *go about with him*, I will circumvent him.

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28. *they are both in a tale*, they both tell the same story.

33. *eftest*, probably a Dogberian variant of some unguessable word—possibly provincial, and not (as Theobald suggested) a misprint for *deftest*. The old word *eft* =again, soon, is nowhere found as an adjective.

47. *Yea by mass*, headed *Const.* in Q. and F., but plainly not Dogbery. We have given it to Verges, *Cou.* having been mistaken for *Con.*

49. *upon his words*, Borachio's charge.

53. *redemption*, damnation.

56. *more...than you can deny*, "for here is corroborative evidence." It is clear that the Clerk goes out at the end of this speech, but no *exit* is marked in Q. or F.

62. *opinion'd*, pinioned. Headed *Constable*, but plainly Dogbery.

63. *Let them be.* Here we are in trouble. Q. reads "*Couley.* Let them be in the hands of Coxcombe." F. heads the speech *Sex.* and prints *Coxcombe* in italics, as if it were a proper name. The reading will not do. Dogbery's next speech plainly shows

that "Coxcombe" was a word of contempt used by one of the prisoners to one of the officers. Malone suggested very happily, "Off Coxcombe!" as Borachio's (or Conrad's) exclamation when he was going to be bound. The whole line is plainly corrupt. We therefore read the speech of Verges as an amplification of Dogbery's "opinion'd"—"Yes, let them be [pinioned]! In the hands!" i.e., "bind their hands." We assign the exclamation to Conrad as he seems touchy about his dignity, and as he immediately adds the immortal and culminating insult.

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67. *thou naughty varlet*, addressed to the struggling prisoner.

68. *Away, you are an ass.* Assigned to *Couley* (i.e. Verges) in Q. and F. It should be Conrad, the printer having wrongly expanded *Con.* as *Couley*.

69. *suspect*, respect.

70. *O that he were here.* The Clerk (as we have suggested) having gone out at the end of his last speech.

76. *as pretty a piece*, etc., as fine a man.

78. *that hath had losses.* Still a common boast among people of a certain class. Emendation is entirely unnecessary.

ACT V

Scene I

No break in Q. *Actus Quintus* in F. "Probably a front-stage scene" (Boas). The place is anywhere out of doors —for stage purposes, the same street or square as that in which we first meet the Constables (III. 3). The time is Monday (the wedding-day), but much later. The events plainly happen soon after the judicial interrogation of IV. 2. It may be observed that the Prince says "good den," which is supposed not to be a morning greeting, and Leonato, parting from Claudio, says, "To-morrow then I will expect your coming, To-night I take my leave."

6. *Nor let no comforter*, a usual Shakespearean double negative.

10. *And bid him speak*, some editors have tried to fill out the line—unnecessarily, not to say unwarrantably. A short line in a dramatic speech is not uncommon in Shakespeare—*Hamlet*, for instance, has several.

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12. *every strain for strain*, etc., "let his feelings endure exactly the same tense racking as mine, let his grief exactly resemble mine in all points."

61. 16. *And sorrow, wag.* A difficult passage. Q. and F. read:

"And sorrow, wagge, crie hem, when he should grone,"

Capell emended it by altering *And* to *Bid* and omitting the comma, "Bid sorrow wag," i.e. "Bid sorrow go." This makes sense, but it is not so much emendation as re-composition. Let us examine the original reading. The statement is, "If any person, who has suffered exactly the calamity that has befallen me, will smile, stroke his beard, grieve, wag his head, cry 'hem' when he should groan...bring him to me, and I will learn patience of him!" The sequence does not seem to me unnatural. It describes one who experiences calamity, but bears it more lightly than Leonato. An old man of less acute feelings would be platitudinous, sententious, would wag his old head very wisely, would protest his sorrow, and patch the sorrow with proverbs, and so forth. He would "sorrow" incidentally, and do many other things as well; Leonato would do nothing but sorrow. For the use of *sorrow* as a verb, see *The Winter's Tale*, v. 2. 99: "Who was most marble there changed colour; some swooned, all sorrowed"; *As You Like It*, III. v. 88:

"Wherever sorrow is, relief would be:
If you do sorrow at my grief in love,
By giving love your sorrow and my grief
Were both exterminated."

We, therefore, retain here the reading of Q. and F. At the same time we must admit that the line is questionable. The use of *wag* intransitively, for instance, is suspicious. But see *wring* (l. 28).

18. *With candle-wasters*, with those who burn the midnight-oil in concocting the proverbs and wise saws that will patch grief and drug sorrow. Other editors, however, understand the "candle-wasters" to be roysterers and revellers among whom the sorrowful man may drink and forget his grief. The first explanation is better, as a consideration of the lines that follow will show.

yet, nevertheless, in spite of all I have said.

22. *tasting it*, qualifies the *they* implied in *their*.

23. *counsel turns to passion*, their reason turns into acute feeling—their wisdom into emotion. See for an instant example how the philosophical brother Anthony behaves to Claudio.

which before, the antecedent is *counsel*, not *passion*.

24. *preceptial medicine*, the medicine of precepts—would use words to cure madness. Q. prints *medcine*, F. *medicine*. We want all the syllables here.

28. *wring*, writhe. The only other clear intransitive use is in *Cymbeline*, III. 6. 79: "He wrings at some distress."

61. 29. *no man's virtue*, etc., "but ['*tis*] no man's virtue nor sufficiency"; corresponding to "'tis all men's office" above. The meaning is that it is all men's duty to counsel patience to others, but it is in no man's strength or power to accept his own moralizings when he is himself the sufferer.

32. *My griefs...advertisement*, my griefs are so strong that they drown any words of advice, or counsel; *advertisement* in Shakespeare invariably means *information* or *advice*.

33. *children*, suggested by *cry louder*.

35. *never yet philosopher*, etc. Compare Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*, LV: "The Stoicks that condemn passion, and command a man to laugh in Phalaris his Bull, could not endure without a groan a fit of the Stone or Colick."

37. *writ the style of gods*, written as if above human feeling, as did the Stoics. See, for instance, Epictetus, *Encheiridion*, XVI: "When you see a man shedding tears in sorrow for a child abroad or dead, or for loss of property, beware that you are not carried away by the impression that it is outward ills that make him miserable. Keep this thought by you: 'What distresses him is not the event, for that does not distress another, but his judgment on the event.' Therefore do not hesitate to sympathize with him as far as words go, and, if it so chance, even to groan with him; but take heed that you do not also groan in your inner being."

38. *made a push at*, spurned them in contempt; or, more strongly, defiantly attacked them. Some take it as a contemptuous exclamation, like "Pish." To me, "to make a push at" sounds distinctly Shakespearean; "to make a 'pish' at" sounds distinctly editorial.

sufferance, suffering.

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47. *We have some haste*, Pedro is plainly embarrassed and wishes to escape.

49. *Are you so hasty now*, "You, who proposed to stay here at least a month?"

all is one, it makes no difference.

55. *beshrew*, a mild imprecation—"A plague upon my hand." If anything is needed to deepen our contempt of Claudio it is his bearing towards the old man whom he has grossly injured and held up to public shame.

58. *fleer*, sneer contemptuously—"grin like a dog" and show the teeth.

60. *As under privilege*, as if I were taking advantage of old age to boast of what I have done in youth and what I should do now if it were not for my age.

62. 62. *to thy head*, to thy face.

64. *reverence*, the reverence due to age, and therefore age itself.

65. *bruise of many days*, batterings of time.

69. *she lies buried*, etc. Pedro and Claudio take no notice here or elsewhere of Hero's supposed death. The Friar's generous anticipation is disproved.

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75. *his nice fence*, his command of the niceties of swordsmanship.

78. *daff*, put me aside; see Glossary.

80. *He shall kill two of us*. Here the colourless, apparently negligible, and lately philosophical old brother suddenly flames into unimagined ferocity, and has to be calmed by the injured father. "I did not think Master Silence had been a man of this mettle."

82. *Win me and wear me*. A proverb having obvious reference to the chase. You can't wear the bear's skin till you have won it.

answer me, technically, with his sword.

84. *foining*, thrusting—as readers of Malory will remember.

91. *Jacks*, see note to I. I. 167.

95. *Scambling*, contending, squabbling.

out-facing, swaggering.

96. *cog*, cheat.

deprave, traduce.

97. *anticly*, spelt *antiquely* in Q. and F.—get themselves up in fantastic and would-be terrifying guises. Some editors wish (unnecessarily) to omit *and*.

98. *speak off*, rattle out.

103. *wake your patience*, stay longer to put further strain on you. Someone has suggested "passions" for "patience." The mettlesome Anthony, however, has already shown his "patience" very wide awake. The word is ironical.

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108. *No*, a rhetorical exclamation; printed in Q.: "No come brother, away, I will be heard."

114. *almost come*, some editors have spied superfluity here, and have proposed to omit one *almost*. The repetition is surely jocularly intended.

116. *We had lik'd to have had*, we were likely to have had.

124. *high-proof melancholy*, melancholy to a very high degree. Shakespeare nowhere else uses *high proof* and does not often

use *proof* to mean the temper of armour or weapon. It is something of a paradox that "high-proof melancholy" is equivalent to "very low spirits."

64. 130. *draw to pleasure us*, draw your wit out of its cover—give us pleasure with your instrument of wit as the minstrels do with their instruments of music. There may be an allusion to the drawing of a bow across the strings of an instrument.

133. *though care kill'd a cat*, evidently a cat in an adage.

135. *in the career*, here follow terms drawn from the tilting-yard; *career* has already been noted as the *charge* or onset of a horse; *another staff*, in the next speech, is another lance shaft; *broke cross*, snapped in the middle—a sign of bad tilting, for the well-directed lance splintered along its length. Shakespeare himself provides the best illustration in *As You Like It*, III. 4: "O, that's a brave man! he writes brave verses, speaks brave words, swears brave oaths and breaks them bravely, quite traverse, athwart the heart of his lover: as a puisny tilter that spurs his horse but on one side breaks his staff like a noble goose; but all's brave that youth mounts and folly guides." Furness refers to an admirable modern illustration in chap. VIII of *Ivanhoe*.

139. *By this light*, an exclamation.

he changes, turns colour.

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141. *turn his girdle*. This phrase has received many contradictory explanations. Only one thing is clear, namely, that it was a proverbial saying, the full form apparently being, "If you be angry, you may turn the buckle of your girdle behind you." What connection there was between anger and turning the girdle is not clear. Some editors have explained it as "get ready to fight"—as wrestlers might turn their belts to get the buckles out of the way. Others say that it means "do something to occupy your hands for a few moments till the fury of your anger has abated"—as Tattycoram was recommended to count five-and-twenty. Others, again, declare that it is a metaphorical admonition—"if you are angry, change your humour to the opposite extreme." There are so many varying examples of the phrase that no one explanation will fit them all. No doubt the meaning has blurred, as proverbial meanings do, in the course of years. Here, the action of drawing a sword is meant.

142. *a word in your ear*, a private message. Apparently Benedick is trying to make the challenge private to Claudio and himself. The Prince overhears some of it, but not all.

143. *God bless me*, God save me.

65. 146. *do me right*, give me proper satisfaction.

protest, proclaim, publish.

152. *Ay faith*. This is not the exclamation *In faith*, the spelling of which in Q. is invariably *yfaith*. Here both Q. and F. distinctly have *I faith*. Now *I* is their spelling of the exclamation that we spell *Ay*, and it is undoubtedly meant here. *Ay* certainly answers the preceding question, "What, a feast, a feast?" Capell took the same view; but most other editors write *I' faith*.

a calf's head and a capon, etc. This no doubt meant more to an Elizabethan audience than to us. Claudio's feast is one at which he will carve a calf's head, a capon, and a woodcock. The last is a proverbial emblem of stupidity, and the other two are specially contemptuous and insulting appellations.

154. *curiously*, neatly, carefully.

159. *says she*. So in Q. and F.; F. has also *true saies she* where Q. has *said*. I think it is better to have them all *said* uniformly. The reader can make the correction.

162. *a wise gentleman*, contemptuously, "a very sapient fellow."

163. *hath the tongues*, talks several languages.

173. *the old man's daughter*, etc. It is reserved for the Prince to add the worst touch of callousness. The Friar's hope that Hero's death would awaken pity in these noble lords is clearly vain. In Bandello's story the sinners are at least gentlemen. One feels that what Pedro and Claudio needed was not a sword, but a horsewhip.

174. *God saw him*. Claudio's blend of Genesis iii. 8 and II. 3 of the present play.

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182. *as braggarts do their blades*, Falstaff and his merry men at Gad's Hill, for instance.

184. *I must discontinue your company*. There is at least one gentleman in Messina.

your brother the bastard, etc. It is a touch of weakness here that the Prince takes so little notice of this startling news, which he, apparently, is the last to hear.

193. *What a pretty thing*, etc. To be read in the light of the preceding speeches, as thus: "What a sight it is when a witty and sensible man becomes portentous and takes off his cloak to fight at the wish of a woman." At least this is a possible meaning; but it does not imply (as Furness seems to think) that Benedick was *at that moment* divested of his cloak.

195. *a giant*, etc., "he may be bigger than an ape in body, but the ape is wiser in mind."

66. 197. *But soft you.* "But hush, let me think, let me rouse myself and be serious too." Boas remarks, very aptly, "The apostrophe, occurring in the midst of Don Pedro's banter, sounds like a quotation from a contemporary play." There is no need to punctuate (as some editors do) "Pluck up, my heart, and be sad."

200. *reasons*, no doubt a pun on "raisins." Shakespeare made it more than once, and others before and after him.

nay, etc. We may suppose at this point that Conrad struggles to get free of his bonds. Borachio is evidently abject and resigned.

201. *once*, as you were just now at the prison.

204. *Hearken after*, give a hearing to.

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215. *one meaning well suited*, "one thing said four times over in his very own manner."

217. *bound to your answer*, an obvious play on words, occurring again in *Comedy of Errors* where (v. I. 306) Dromio of Ephesus says to Ægeon, bound, and on his way to execution, "Whatsoever a man denies, you are now bound to believe him."

218. *too cunning*, too clever.

219. *mine answer*, again a play on words, (1) reply, (2) retaliation.

224. *incensed me*, incited me.

238. *And fled he is*, etc. It has taken Pedro some time first to learn and then to understand the news of his brother's flight.

240. *that I lov'd it*, in which I loved it.

241. *plaintiffs*, defendants.

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247. *Which is the villain.* Even now, as we have pointed out, Leonato does not know what man is implicated in the charge against his daughter.

254. *a pair of honourable men.* The Prince and Claudio.

262. *yet sinn'd I not*, etc. It is interesting to note here Claudio's view of his own conduct. He was merely mistaken!

269. *Possess*, inform.

271. *Can labour aught*, if your love can work in the direction of sad poetry.

272. *Hang her an epitaph*, the ethical dative again.

278. *she alone is heir*, but brother Anthony has a visible, though not audible, son in this play. The incident is a poor copy of Bandello's story.

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283. *poor Claudio.* The first word of genuine pity uttered by Claudio is for "poor Claudio."

287. *was packt*, was implicated, confederate.

296. *wears a key*, at first it was only a lock; it is now a key as well, in the expansive Dogberian mind.

297. *borrows money in God's name*, gets money out of people by the use of pious words.

305. *God save the foundation*, the beggars' phrase of thanks at the religious houses where they had been relieved.

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314. *Until to-morrow*, etc. Both Q. and F. print this as prose; but it clearly falls into lines.

Scene II

No break in Q. or F. The scene is probably the Orchard again. Ursula's speech shows that it was out of doors. Notice in this scene the complete ignorance or unconcern of Margaret, the villain's accomplice or accessory.

7. *come over it*, an obvious pun on *stile* and *style*—both spelt alike in Elizabethan English.

comely, no doubt a quibbling allusion to *come*.

10. *keep below stairs.* Be a servant still. There is no sign of a question-mark in Q. F. adds one.

16. *I give thee the bucklers.* I own myself beaten—I drop my shield.

21. *with a vice.* A vice is a screw. Cotgrave defines *vis* as "the vice, or spindle of a press."

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26. *The god of love.* According to Ritson this was the beginning of an old song by William Elderton. In Q. and F. the lines are printed as prose. The repetition of "and knows me" is probably dramatic—Benedick is hesitating for the next line.

30. *Leander*, who swam the Hellespont to meet his love Hero.

31. *Troilus.* The "go-between" of Troilus and Cressida was Cressida's uncle Pandarus.

32. *carpet-mongers*, a worse form of carpet-knights—people who receive titles for political or back-stairs reasons. "Monger"

and its cognates were words of contempt. Earlier we have *fashion-monging*.

71. 37. *innocent*, silly.

40. *festival terms*, elaborated phrases.

45. *with that I came*, "with what I came for."

53. *undergoes*, is now lying under my challenge. We talk of people "lying under" an accusation.

54. *subscribe*, proclaim.

57. *maintain'd.* We should expect either "maintain'd... would," or "maintain...will." But the slight looseness is defensible in a conversational passage.

58. *politic*, crafty.

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62. *against my will...In spite of your heart.* A subtle piece of quibbling, hitherto left unexplained. We must take *will* and *heart* to represent *reason* and *feeling*. Benedick's old antagonism to Beatrice was a particular case of his pose as an anti-feminist. See I. I. 154, where Benedick admits his pose; and especially I. I. 213, where Pedro says: "Thou wast ever an obstinate heretic in the despite of beauty"; and Claudio adds, "And never could maintain his part, *but in the force of his will.*" Observe the part I have italicized. In the present passage Benedick exclaims, "I do suffer love indeed, for I love thee against my *will*," i.e. against my old convictions. Beatrice replies, "In spite of your heart I think"—meaning, not, "You love me in spite of your heart" (the surface meaning), but, "Then your will is against your feelings—your will against love is spiting your own heart. Poor heart! If you spite it by setting your will against it, I must spite it too; for how could I cherish what my friend regards as his enemy?"

67. *It appears not*, etc., your wisdom appears not, etc.

70. *in the time of good neighbours*, in the days when men freely praised each other, rather than themselves. Presumably, the Golden Age; at any rate, a very long time ago.

72. *the widow weeps.* Furness quotes a capital story from the *Memoirs of Arthur Hugh Clough* to the effect that a gentleman, leading a lady out of church after the funeral service of her husband, asked her to marry him, but was told that he was too late, as she was promised to the man who had led her in, but that she would remember him on the next occasion. The *C. Mery Talys* and other collections of *facetiae* are rich in stories of widows' easy memories. *Hamlet* illustrates Shakespeare's views.

74. *Question*; usually explained as "That is the question." But this exclamatory use of the single word is very unusual.

Actually, the word is superfluous. Can it be a verbal repetition of the question-mark in the preceding line?

72. 74. *in clamour*, of the funeral bell.

75. *in rheum*, in tears.

76. *Don Worm*, typifying the gnawing of conscience. Compare *Richard III*, I. 3. 222:

"The worm of conscience still begnaw thy soul!"

78. *to myself so much*, etc. I have kept here the exact reading of Q. and F. Editors from Rowe onwards have agreed that a stop is missing between *self* and *so*, and that the right reading is "as I am to myself, So much for praising myself," etc. There is no doubt whatever that the insertion of a stop makes the passage easier to read; but I feel sure that the passage is not meant to be easy and that the insertion of a stop is wrong. Benedick's whole speech is a fantasia on *praise* and *myself*. "It is necessary for a man to blow his own trumpet, as I do for myself so much in my own praise, I myself being, as I myself will testify, a person worthy of praise." This meaning seems to me consistent with the whole of Benedick's elaborately humorous flourishing. To read "So much, etc." is to make him dismiss the subject at this point—as in fact he does *not* do. He changes the subject at "and now, etc." "So much for praising myself" sounds more like Colley Cibber's "So much for Buckingham!" than like Shakespeare. The reader with the facts before him can choose which reading he prefers.

87. *old coil*; "the devil to pay"; *old* as a slang intensive is both ancient and modern—as ancient as the tapster in 2 *Hen. IV*, II. 4. 21, and as modern as Aunt Susan in *Tono-Bungay*.

at home, an indication that the scene is out-of-doors.

Scene III

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The scene is supposed to represent the family "monument" or mausoleum of the Leonati—not necessarily an interior scene; indeed, the Prince's speech indicates that the company are out of doors and that the time is the dawn of day. The "epitaph" would be hung upon the gate of the mausoleum, which is all that the scene need show. It would be, technically, a front-stage scene. The whole scene is feeble, and, save for a touch at the end, curiously un-Shakespearean.

Epitaph. In Q. and F. the heading *Epitaph* is on the same line

as the Lord's reply, and we may assume that he recites the lines solemnly and formally as precentor for the company. The heading *Claudio*, following at once at the end of the *Epitaph*, shows clearly that he is not the reader. We have therefore not followed Capell and succeeding editors who have assigned the reading to Claudio. Probability may seem to justify the emendation, but the only authorities, Q. and F., are clear against it. Nor is there any justification for the editorial assumption that the final couplet is not part of the *Epitaph*. It seems to me a distinct and proper conclusion to the votive verse. But speculation should be unnecessary. It is printed (with an indentation) as part of the *Epitaph* in Q. and F. and no editor has a right to depart from those authorities when they are clear and precise. The one emendation adopted here is the substitution of F.'s *dombe* as the rhyme to *tombe* for the clearly mistaken *toomb-dead* of Q. The quality of the verse suggests that Claudio must have persuaded the uneasily rhyming Benedick to write both Epitaph and Song.

73. 5. *guerdon*, reward, recompense.

7. *with shame*, by shame—shame being the weapon with which she was slain.

13. *virgin knight*. The most striking parallel is that first quoted by Malone from *Two Noble Kinsmen*, v. i. 142—it is Emilia's invocation to Diana:

"O sacred, shadowye, cold and constant Queene,
Abandoner of Revells, mute, contemplative,
Sweet, solitary, white, as chaste and pure
As windfande Snow, who to thy femall knights
Alow'st no more blood than will make a blush, etc."

20. *Till death be uttered*. The short scenes of this play seem to offer the greatest difficulties. The last lines of the present dirge are an example. They are rhyme without much reason, and the difficulty is increased by the fact that F. prints "Heavily, heavily" as the first refrain, and "Heavenly, heavenly" as the last. We can assume that this is wrong, and follow Q. in repeating "Heavily, heavily." But why are the graves to "yawne and yeeld" their dead? and what is the meaning of "Till death be uttered"? Those anxious to grapple with a really unimportant difficulty (for, frankly, the song is but doggerel and probably not Shakespeare's), should consult Furness, who quotes the remarks of many commentators. Not one is convincing; some are so far-fetched as to be ridiculous. But surely the words set to music even at funerals are not necessarily to be taken literally. Claudio and his friends did not actually want the dead Leonati to forsake their graves. Such invocations are "common form"

in dramatic and operatic burial scenes. And "Till death be uttered" does not mean "Till death be ousted," or anything like "Till Death is swallowed up in victory," but simply "While this decease is being lamented," i.e. "While this dirge is sung"—the walking dead being the fittest audience for a charnel-house rite that is to become a yearly ceremony. I have departed from Q. and F. in one small detail. They print:

"Midnight assist our mone, help us to sigh & grone."

and:

"Now unto thy bones good night, yeerely will I do this right."

I have broken these into the obvious couplets—the whole page in Q. is crowded as if space were precious. I have also followed the usual custom in printing *rite* for *right*. The original word could be defended, however. Q. and F. both give this last couplet to the Lord who reads the *Epitaph*. Most editors give them to Claudio. As we have noted above, such lines seem appropriate to Claudio, but they are distinctly not given to him in the old texts. I keep the old reading, assuming that a Lord acts as the solemn spokesman of the company. It should be noted that the couplet is not necessarily parallel to that beginning, "Hang thou there, etc." The *Song* and the *Epitaph* are quite unlike in form.

73. 24. *Good morrow masters.* These words of the Prince and Claudio are meant as farewell to the company, the two going one way, the rest another.

25. *The wolves have preyed.* A not impossible pun.

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30. *Come let us hence*, addressed to Claudio alone.

32. *speeds.* It has been suggested that this should be *speed's*, a contraction for *speed us*. I think it extremely unlikely. The lines say, "And Hymen is now about to give a happier ending than the one for which we have been mourning." That is, for *speeds* read *is speeding*. The objection to this reading is that Claudio seems to assume something that he does not know. Shakespeare's audience was not likely to raise refined objections of that sort. What it wanted was a rhyme to end the scene. The audience is already in the secret about the "happy ending"—such as it is. Moreover, to the entirely self-satisfied, self-worshipping and self-pitying Claudio, the grand gesture of his expiation is itself a happy ending. What he says in effect is, "I am now really going to marry Someone; and that will be very fortunate for Someone."

Scene IV

A full-stage scene. Time: later the same morning. The place is a room in Leonato's house. We keep the old stage-direction, which mentions Margaret, although she does not speak. Did Shakespeare make her attempt an explanation of her innocence, and then find it too improbable? The "old man" is brother Anthony again.

74. 17. *confirm'd*, firm, unmoved—so that the deception shall be successful.

20. *to bind me, or undo me*, an excellent pun. As the confirmed bachelor and duellist of sex, Benedick is now indeed "undone."

23. *my daughter lent her*, i.e. Beatrice saw as the conspirators made her. The speech is enigmatical to Benedick, as we see below.

25. *The sight whereof*, etc., i.e. Benedick saw as the conspirators made him.

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29. *May stand*, may accord or harmonize.

30. *marriage*, pronounced almost as French *mariage*.

33. *Here comes*, etc. Line omitted in F., doubtless by accident.

39. *here's the Friar ready*. We have added an *exit* for Anthony. There is none in Q. and F.

41. *a February face*. Benedick has begun to understand the enigma; hence his rather bitter retort to Claudio. And he has not forgotten that Claudio deserves a thrashing.

43. *the savage bull*, of which we have already heard quite enough. Claudio is plainly incorrigible. There is an allusion to the story of Europa and Jove in the form of a bull as told in Ovid, *Metamor*. Bk II, Fab. xiv; but there the horns of the bull are described as garlanded, not gilded.

45. *Europa*, in this line the place, in the next the nymph.

Enter Brother, etc. It is clear that all the ladies are veiled.

52. *other recknings*. Furness takes an unduly sombre view of this phrase. I agree with him that Claudio is repulsively flippant; but I think the present line means something like, "I'll pay you for this later on; here is a deeper reckoning that I must first pay."

54. *This same is she*. Clearly given to Leonato in Q. and F. Editors since Theobald give the line to Anthony. The change is quite unnecessary.

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60. *other wife...other husband*: *other* here means *former*. I think no subtlety of reproach is intended. Hero is not subtle.

63. *defil'd*, omitted in F., no doubt by accident. It is difficult to follow editors who defend the omission on the ground that otherwise Hero is confessing her own guilt. Was she not "defiled" abominably, detestably, by Claudio's public denunciations?

75. *Why then*, etc. F. prints these two lines as prose. Following Q. and F., we omit *for* in l. 76, although there is *for* in the corresponding l. 79. F. omits *that* in ll. 80, 81 and *such* in l. 82. Q. is better throughout.

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97. *Peace I will stop your mouth*. Given to *Leon.* in Q. and F. Theobald emends to *Bene.* It is difficult not to agree. Who should "stop her mouth" but Benedick?

101. *if a man will be beaten*, etc. If a man is going to be afraid of ridicule he will never be comfortable.

106. *giddy*, changeable.

110. *denied Beatrice*, refused her at the last moment.

112. *a double-dealer*, from a single man into a "double" man —with a play on the phrase "double-dealer," meaning "deceiver."

119. *of my word*, on my word. An exclamation, "No, I vow, we'll have it first"

121. *tipt with horn*. The curious should consult Furness who quotes many commentators—all at variance. It is the old, old joke and really needs no explanation. Wright (quoting Stanley), says: "Becket's rude pastoral staff of pearwood with its crook of black horn was one of the relics shown to the pilgrims at Canterbury."

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124. *till to-morrow*. As the play is to end with joy, the spectacle of retribution is postponed.

Dance, marking a joyous close to tragedy turned comedy.

GLOSSARY

This glossary owes most to the *New English Dictionary*. Frequent reference is also made to *An Etymological Dictionary of Modern English*, by Ernest Weekley. The quotations from Cotgrave are taken from the edition of 1673, with the added *Dictionaire Anglois & François*, by Robert Sherwood.

a, an old corruption of the third personal pronoun in all numbers and genders; used by the "low" characters in Shakespeare, and occasionally (in familiar speech) by the loftier.

abused, deceived. Compare *misuse*.

advertisement, admonition. Cotgrave has: "*Advertissement*: an advertisement; signification, information, intelligence, notice; a warning, advise, motion, admonishment." The modern F. *avertissement* has the same sense.

affect, love, incline to, aspire to, Fr. *affecter*, L. *affectare* = *ad* + *facere*, hence *affection*, inclination.

agot, agate, a name applied to the semi-pellucid variegated chalcedonies. Also, a very diminutive person, in allusion to small figures cut in agates for seals. From sixteenth century Fr. *agathe*, Lat. *achātes*, Gr. ἀχάτης. Spelt also *agath*, *agget*, *achate*. Said to have been named from the river *Achates* in Sicily.

alms, charitable gift. Appears in many forms, *aelmysse*, *aelmesse*, *almesse*, *almese*, *almes*, *almys*, etc. A singular noun, plural wanting, but singular generally used for plural. O.E. *aelmysse*; pop. Lat. *alimosina*, from *eleēmosyna*; Gr. ἐλεημοσύνη. The Scottish *almous* or *awmous* (*vide The Antiquary*) appears to be an independent adoption of Norse *almusa*.

an, if; *an* is a weakened form of *and*, the latter being the spelling used throughout all the original Shakespeare texts. Only in such forms as *an't please you* does Shakespeare use *an*, the sole exception being *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 2. 232 (ed. 1623), where we find "an if you grow so nice." There is no reason why *and* = and, and *and* = if, should both be kept in modern English, and *an* is therefore uniformly used in this volume for *and* = if.

ancientry, old-time dignity. The Shakespearean spelling, *auncient*, *auncientry*, represents the pronunciation of the French original *ancien*.

angel. An old English gold coin, called at first the *angel-noble*, being originally a new issue of the *noble*, having as its device the archangel Michael standing upon and piercing the

dragon. In Shakespeare's time it was worth 10*s*. It was last coined by Charles I. *N.E.D.* notes that this was the coin always presented to patients "touched" for the King's Evil.

antique, antiquely. It. *antico*, fantastic, grotesque, from L. *antiquus*, old. In all its early spellings, *antick*, *antike*, *antyke*, *antique*, the accent falls on the first syllable. Later, the spelling *antique* approximated in pronunciation to the French, and the word thus accented became limited to its modern sense, *antic* (formerly both noun and adj.) being kept as a noun with the sense of *eccentric, grotesque behaviour*. In current speech we make something like the same distinction between the adjectives *antique* and *antiquated*.

approved, tried, tested; also proved, convicted; from O.F. *aprover* = Lat. *ad* + *probare*.

argument, subject (II. 3. 11); demonstration, example (II. 3. 217); intellectual qualities (III. 1. 96).

arrant, notorious, utter, thoroughly bad. A variant of *errant*—the forms *arraunt*, *arrand*, *erraunt*, *errand*, *errant* all occurring. The sense is derived from *errant robber*, a wandering outlaw subsisting by theft. The adjective is found, though rarely, in a good sense—*downright*.

arras, tapestry, curtains; from Arras. There is no noun like this in French. Sherwood (in Cotgrave) gives "Arras, *Drap d'Arras*."

assurance (II. 2. 44), certainty.

attired (IV. 1. 142), wrapt (in thought). O.F. *atirer*, *atirier*, put in order, arrange, array. The English *attire* = *dress*, is probably a confusion of this with the different verb, *atorner* (*orner*) with its noun *atour*.

authority (IV. 1. 34), guarantee, assurance.

baldrick, belt—either waist-belt or shoulder-belt. Occurs in such forms as *baudrik*, *bawdrick*, *baudry*. Origin uncertain. Cotgrave has: "*Baudrier*, a hide, skin, or piece of dressed, curried, and coloured cow's leather; also, a belt, baudrick, or sword-girdle of that leather." The termination *-rick* may have originated in the rich ornamentation.

behaviour, deportment, "external appearance with respect to grace" (Johnson). *Behave* was formed, apparently in the fifteenth century from *Be* + *have*, to express a reflexive sense "to have or bear oneself." Compare Germ. *sich behaben* (Fr. *se porter*). *Behaviour* is formed by analogy with *havoir*, variant of *aver*, from O.F. verb *aveir* (mod. *avoir*) in a substantive sense, meaning a possession or "having."

bent, extent to which a bow may be bent, or a spring wound up; hence, degree of endurance, limit of capacity. O.E. verb, *bendan*. Still current in the phrase "to the top of his bent."

borrord, bear-keeper, bear-herd. "Beare-heard" appears in 2 *Hen. IV*, I. 2. 191. Shakespeare apparently does not use "bear-ward," which occurs, however, in the proclamation quoted in Introduction, and in the passage cited in the note to I. I. 35.

birlady, also, *berlady*, *byrlady*, etc., dim. *berlaken* (M.N.D.), *byrlakin*. Contraction of *by our Lady*, a mild expletive or adjuration.

biting (IV. I. 168), sharp, grievous.

blazon, coat of arms, or proper heraldic description of a coat of arms. Originally a shield, then, later, a shield in heraldry. Hence, figuratively, a clear token or sign. From O.F. *blason*, a shield. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* we get "His bronde and his blasoun both thay token."

block, fashion. Literally a block or mould used in hat-making. Apparently a M.E. adaptation of Fr. *bloc*, the origin of which is disputed.

break, open or begin a subject. A specialized meaning of *break* in the sense of "to lay open by breaking." We may "break our minds" about a certain thing or "break with a person" about a certain thing.

bring (III. 2. 3), escort, conduct.

bucklers, round shields with a boss—or the boss on such shields. Fr. *boucle*, *bouclier*, the former of which gives us *buckle*.

burden, properly *bourdon*, the "drone" of a bagpipe, or the low undersong to a melody. Perhaps an imitative word. There is an O.F. *bourdon*, a pilgrim's staff, with which some have tried to connect it. The word has nothing to do with *burden* or *burthen*, with which, however, it was very early confused.

canker, dog-rose (*Rosa canina*). *N.E.D.* quotes Hester, *Phiorav. Secr.* (1582): "The buddes of Cankers or wild Eglantine." The name is also used locally for the common Wild Poppy and the Dandelion. The word is another form of Latin *cancer* (a crab), and was applied to the disease from a supposed resemblance of the tumour to a crab. The word came to be applied to any consuming or destroying activity—canker-worms, and so, weeds, such as those named.

career, a short gallop at full speed—often in such a phrase as "to pass a career." Technically, it was a charge or encounter at a tournament. The term was gradually extended to mean any rapid motion of a horse. From Fr. *carrière*, late Lat. *carraria*, cart-road. It appears in several forms—*carriere, careere, carrier*, etc.

carried (IV. I. 208), managed—carried out.

censured (II. 3. 209), judged, rather than condemned (as commonly now).

cheapen, to bid, or offer a price; from *cheap* + *en*. The word originally means a *bargain*, then a *market* (Cheapside, Chipping Norton), then *price* or *value*. It is from this last use that the present verb is derived. It is the O.E. *céap*, bargain, price, stock. In O.E. it also means *cattle*—a possible hint at a primitive measure of value. The modern adjectival sense is an abbreviation of *good cheap*, a good bargain; *coper*, in horse-coper (horse-dealer) is a related word.

cinquepace, galliard, an active dance; simply the Fr. *cinq*, five, *pas*, paces. Other forms, *cinquepasse*, *sinkapace*, etc. See note *ad loc*.

circumstances (III. 2. 91), elaborate speech, as in *Merchant of Venice*, I. I. 153–4:

> "You know me well: and herein spend but time
> To wind about my love with circumstance."

clap into. Johnson has, "To enter with alacrity and briskness upon anything." The use of such a phrase easily follows from the idea of suddenness in the word *clap*; "to strike up" is an exact modern parallel. M.E. *clappen*; the word does not seem to exist or survive in O.E. An imitative word.

claw, flatter, fawn upon. The sense is derived from the gratification experienced in being scratched where one itches—especially in awkward places. Hence, *clawback*, a sycophant, or flatterer. Cotgrave gives *to claw* under *flater*, and defines *Adulateur* as "a flatterer, cogger, smoother, soother, fawner, claw-back."

close, in stand close (III. 3. 101), in concealment.

cog, cheat, flatter, seduce. Origin doubtful.

coil, "probably a word of colloquial or even slang character which rose into literary use; many terms of similar meaning have had such an origin; cf. *pother*, *row*, *rumpus*, *shindy*, *hubbub*, *hurly-burly*, etc." (*N.E.D.*). It appears first in the sixteenth century. *N.E.D.* quotes Drant, *Horace Epist.*:

> "Againe, thinckes thou that I at Rome my vearses can indyte
> Mongst so much toyle, and such a coyle, such soking carke
> and spite."

Other forms, *coyle*, *quoile*, *quoyle*, etc. A suggested derivation is O.F. *acueil* (accueil), encounter; *coil* would thus be a shortened form of *accoil*.

complexion, outward appearance, constitution, disposition, "nature." From Fr. *complexion*, from Lat. *complexion-em*, "combination," and (later) "physical constitution" (*com* together + *plectere*, to plait, twine). Other forms, *complexioun*, *complexcion*, *complection*, etc.

conceit, fancy, imagination. Not originally used in a disparaging sense. The noun appears to have been formed from *conceive* on the analogy of *deceit* from *deceive*—there is no corresponding word in O.F. (Lat. *conceptus*, a conceiving). Other forms, *conceyte*, *conseyte*, *consayte*, *consate*, etc.

confirmed, well-founded, unquestionable (II. 1. 343); steady, "with confirm'd countenance" = "with a straight face" (V. 4. 17).

conjecture (IV. 1. 104), suspicion.

convert, change (intrans.). *N.E.D.* quotes Fenton's *Guicciardini*, "His revenues would convert to nothing in a moment," and Dryden's Translations (*Cinyras and Myrrha*, 342), "Her solid Bones convert to solid Wood" (Lat. *con*, together + *vertere*, to turn).

convey, to transfer, to steal; hence, *conveyance* = light-fingered dexterity. The best illustration is *Merry Wives*, I. 3. 31:

Nym. The good humour is to steal at a minute's rest.
Pist. Convey, the wise it call: Steal? foh: a fico for the phrase.

conveyance has also a better meaning applicable here—form of expression, manner of conveying meaning. Thus, Greene's *Art of Conny-Catching* has: "I shewed no elegant phrases nor fine figurative conveyance in my first book"; and Ralph Robynson's translation of *Utopia* has: "The witty invention and fine conveyance or disposition of the matter." (O.F. *con-veier*, from Lat. *con* + O.F. *veie*, *voie* = Lat. *via*, way.)

cousin, cozen, *cousin* (Med. Lat. *cosinus*) is used by Shakespeare, (1) in its ordinary modern sense, (2) as the name of any relative, e.g. niece, nephew, (3) as a name applied by one sovereign to another, or to a noble of high rank, indicating fellowship. *Cozen* is to *cheat* or *defraud*. It is found as *cosen*, *cosin*, *coosin*, *couzen*, *cousen*, *cousin*, and its likeness to the former word leads to frequent puns. Some philologists claim an identity of origin for the two words. *Coz* is the usual Shakespearean abbreviation for *cousin*. It is asserted, however, that *cozen* was brought to England from Italy—*cozzone* being a *horse-dealer* (a *horse-coper*, as we should say now), cheating and horse-dealing frequently going together. Sherwood (in Cotgrave) does not give the latter derivation, but defines *To cousin* as "Tromper sous pretexte de parenté, ou d'affinité."

coy, shy, bashful, retiring, modest—sometimes in an unfavourable sense. From O.F. *coi*, *quei*, *quoy*, *coit*, *quoit*, meaning quiet, still, gentle. Cotgrave uses both *coy* and *quoy*. The Fr. is from Lat. *quietus*, whence our modern *quiet*, which is thus a doublet of *coy*.

cue, indication of where or when a performer is to begin. In old texts it is written *q* or *qu*—the present play has "Speake

Counte, 'tis your Qu." It is suggested that this is merely an abbreviation of *quando*, when. There seems to be no connection with *queue*.

cunning, clever, learned, skilful, "knowing"—in a good sense. Midland form of pres. part. of M.E. *cunnen*, to know. A.S. *cunnan*. It occurs in such spellings as *cunnyng*, *connyng*, *kunnyng*, *coning*, etc. Wyclif's version of Genesis ii. 9 has, "A tree of kunnyng of good and yvel"; and in 1 Sam. xvi. 18, "The sone of Ysaye Bethlemyte, kunnynge to harpe."

curiously (v. i. 154), elaborately, carefully; *curious* is from Lat. *curiosus*; (*cura* = *care*) using care—*inquisitive* is a secondary sense.

curst (of persons), perverse, malignant, cantankerous, virulent; (of animals), savage, fierce. Easily derived from *curse*. Mandeville applies it to Herod, who was "over moche cursed and cruelle." The word *curse* appears in late O.E. and its origin is unknown.

daff. A variant of *doff*, to do off, to put off; hence, to put aside, to thrust aside. It appears several times in Shakespeare, from a simple use, in *Lover's Complaint*:

> "There my white stole of chastity I daff'd,
> Shook off my sober guards, and civil fears,"

to a figurative use in 1 *Hen. IV*, iv. 1. 96:

> "Where is his son,
> The nimble-footed madcap prince of Wales,
> And his comrades, that daff'd the world aside,
> And bid it pass?"

dear, from O.E. *déore*; appears in such forms as *dere*, *dyere*, *deyr*, *deir*, *deare*. The original meaning is *glorious*, *noble*, *honourable*; then it comes to mean *highly regarded*, *loved*. It is suggested that the Shakespearean *dearest enemy*, *dearest foe* are formed on the analogy of *dearest friend*; but probably a sense of something *very notable* attaches to such uses.

defend, forbid. O.F. *defendre*. The modern Fr. word is current in this sense, as in such familiar notices as *Defense d'afficher*. Milton (*P.L.* xi. 84) writes:

> "O Sons, like one of us Man is become
> To know both good and evil, since his taste
> Of that defended fruit."

deprave, slander, calumniate, vilify. O.F. *depraver*, Lat. *depravare*. "You...have most ignorantly, foolishly, and (more like your selves) maliciously, gone about to deprave, and calumniate the person and writings of Quintus Horacius Flaccus." Ben Jonson, *Poetaster*, v. 3.

discovers (II. 3. 101), shows, reveals. O.F. *descouvrir* (découvrir).

ditties, words for music. It appears in such forms as *dittee*, *dytee*, etc. From O.F. *dité*, *ditté*; Lat. *dictātum*, a thing dictated (*dictare*, to dictate).

drovier, drover. The form in *-ier* or *-yer*, existing in *collier*, *lawyer*, *sawyer*, has not survived in *drapier* or *loveyer* (Chauc.).

ecstasy, the state of being "beside oneself,"—hence, a state of passion, or rapture, or madness. Compare Ophelia's description of Hamlet as "blasted with ecstasy"; from O.F. *exstasie*, med. Lat. *exstasis*, Gr. ἔκστασις. Other forms, *exstasie*, *extasy*, *estasie*, etc. The modern spelling shows direct recourse to Gr.

even (IV. 1. 261), plain. The original meaning is *level*, *smooth*, *free from irregularity*; the remoter senses are easily derived from this. (A.S. *efen*, level, equal.)

fashion-monging, *monger* is from A.S. *mangian* to trade. Apart from its definite occupational usage, as in *ironmonger*, *fellmonger*; it has long been a term of contempt applied to persons who deal with, or specialize in, any disliked wares or activities—*sedition-mongers* appears in current criticism of certain political persons. *Fashion-monging* thus means "having a trivial mind given over to little but the fashions of clothes."

favour, face, countenance. *N.E.D.* quotes *London Gazette* of 1676, "He is of low stature and thin favour." Though *favour* as a noun is obsolete in this sense, it is still used colloquially as a verb—"She favours her mother." M.E. *favor*, from O.F. *favor*; Lat. *favōre-m*, from *favēre*, to regard with good-will. Other forms, *favore*, *favoure*, *favowre*.

fetch (n. and v.) = trap, trick. *N.E.D.* quotes Sternhold and Hopkins, Ps. xli. 7, "And cast their fetches how to trap me with some mortal harm." The verb signifies, in general, "to go for something in order to bring it back"; thus, "to fetch me in" is exactly equivalent to the modern "to take me in," in the sense of "to deceive"—the idea being that the stratagems of the deceivers surround the deceived and gradually draw him in. It is disputed whether *fetch* is derived from the O.E. *fetian*, which gives the obsolete *fet* by Shakespeare in a familiar passage of *Henry V*.

fleer, to mock, jeer, sneer. It resembles several Scand. words meaning to laugh or howl, but cannot be definitely traced to them.

flight, a light, well-feathered arrow for long-distance shooting. *N.E.D.* quotes modern combined forms: "Roving arrows are much heavier and flight-arrows much lighter than others"

(T. Roberts, *Eng. Bowman*, 1801); "The longest well-authentic distance for shooting with flight-arrows is about 600 yards" (Greener, *Gun*, 1881). O.E. *flyht*; other forms, *fleight*, *flyghte*.

flout, to mock, insult, express contempt for. *N.E.D.* notes that it is first recorded in the sixteenth century, and is possibly a special use of *floute*, M.E. form of *flute* (verb), to play on the flute.

foining, thrusting, stabbing, etc. as in fencing. The origin is uncertain. Perhaps connected with Fr. dial. form *foindre* (*feindre*), to *feint*. Cotgrave gives *foigner* as equivalent to *feindre*, to dissemble. Malory uses the word frequently, e.g.: "they avoyded their horses, and put their sheldes afore them and drewe their swerdes, and either gaf other sadde strokes, now here, now there, rasying, tracying, foynynge and hurlynge like two bores the space of two houres" (VII. x).

giddy (v. 4. 106), changeable. Alleged to be from A.S. *gydig*, insane, possessed by a god. So, uncontrolled, unbalanced. The spiritual sense precedes the physical.

guarded, trimmed; *guards* were ornamental borders or trimmings, on a garment, possibly (like other surviving ornaments) first designed for use—as binding or edging to prevent fraying, or as fastenings. This meaning itself developed a metaphorical sense, as in Sidney's *Defence of Poesie*, where he says, "And who reads *Plutarch's* eyther historie or philosophy, shall finde, hee trymmeth both theyr garments, with gards of Poesie."

guerdon, recompense. This word is an oddity. In M.E. it occurs in such forms as *guerdoun*, *gardone*, *gardwyne*, *gerdoun*. Chaucer uses both noun and verb, e.g. "And, sire, right as they have answered wisely and discreetly, right so rede I that they been heighly and sovereynly gerdoned for her noble speche" (*Melibæus*). O.F. has *guedredon*, It. *guidardone*, representing Med. Lat. *widerdonum*, a combination of O.H.G. *widarlōn* (return-loan) with Lat. *donum* (gift). The word is thus a hybrid *wider* (mod. *wieder*) + *donum*.

gull, n. and v. "To gull" is to make a "gull" of anybody; it is uncertain which came first, the noun or the verb. The verb is perhaps connected with "to gull," meaning to swallow or to guzzle; *gull* (n.) is not only the person deceived, but also the deception; and later still it is the deceiver. So we come from Nashe (1594), with his "slowe, yce-braind, beefe-witted gull" to Westmacott (1825) with his "excuse me, sir, but as you are fresh, take care to avoid the gulls," and his note, "*gulls*, knowing ones...on the look out for freshmen." The origin is uncertain.

haggerds; *haggard* is really an adjective, and is applied to a hawk caught after the adult plumage has been assumed; hence,

wild; untamed; as a noun it means such a hawk, and then, by transference, any wild intractable person, especially a woman; as in *Taming of the Shrew*, IV. 2, "this proud disdainful haggerd." Origin uncertain; other forms, *haggart*, *haggred*.

halo, draw, drag, or pull along; now superseded in ordinary speech by *haul*, of which it is a variant. It occurs in such forms as *hayl*, *hail*, *hall*, *hawl*.

halting, limping. A.S. *healt*, *healtian*.

hobby-horse, see note for description of the hobby-horse. The word *hobby* occurs in such forms as *hobyn*, *hoby*, *hobye*. The O.F. *hobin* was adopted from the English. The *hobby* was a small horse or pony—usually of Irish breed. It is suggested that *Hobbin* is a familiar by-form of *Robin* (Robert), parallel with *Hodge* and *Hick* from *Roger* and *Richard*—Dobbin and Dick being other versions of Robert and Richard.

holp, the old past tense of *help*. Shakespeare uses it as past-partic. also, instead of *holpen*. (A.S. *healp*, *holpen*.) He also uses *holp'st*.

humour, way of mind, see note. Weekley says: "F. *humeur*, Lat. (*h*)*umor-em*, moisture. In ancient and medieval physiology, one of the four fluids, 'cardinal humours' which determined the individual temperament. Later applied to 'temper' or mood caused by such 'humours,' and, in E. only, from c. 1700, to a special aspect of the ludicrous or jocose."

important (II. 1. 62), importunate. Not a regular use. *Important* is from verb *importare*; *importunate* from adj. *importunus*, troublesome.

incensed, instigated. A mitigated use of *to incense = to enkindle*. But in *Hen. VIII*, v. 1. 43, we have:

> "Sir (I may tell it you) I thinke I have
> Incenst the Lords o' th' Councell that he is
> A most Arch-Heretique, etc."

which Onions glosses as *insensed* = provoked to believe, and adds, "In literary use from 15th to 17th cent., subsequently dial. and now in gen. use from Northumberland to Cornwall." It is still possible to understand it, however, as a mild form of *incensed = enkindled*.

intend, pretend—a special sense, covered by the Lat. *tendere* = to stretch or tend, with the intensive prefix.

jade, a contemptuous name for a horse—one of bad breed, bad condition or bad temper; then applied contemptuously to a woman, sometimes, but very rarely, to a man. Origin uncertain.

jig, lively dance. It occurs in the forms *jygge*, *gigge*, *gig*. Sometimes assumed to be identical with O.F. *gigue*, a kind of

rude fiddle. Fr. *gigue*, the dance form, is held to be simply an adaptation of the English word. Weekley says: "Of Teut. origin; cf. Ger. *geige*, fiddle, O.N. *gigja*, prob. cogn. with *gig*. Hence *jigger*, of many small mech. devices, in some cases, e.g. at billiards and golf."

kind, natural, native. From this the variations *kind*, related by birth, and *kind*, pleasant, benevolent, are easily derived.

learn me, teach me. The use is very interesting. *To learn* = *to teach* ("I'll larn ye to be a toad!") is now a vulgarism, but was good literary English for many centuries. *To learn* = *to teach* is from A.S. *læran* (Ger. *lehren*); to learn = *to learn* is from A.S. *leornian* (Ger. *lernen*). The first meaning survives in *a learned man*, which means a man who has been *learned* or *taught*, as well as a man who has studied. See *lewd*.

lewd, base. Originally it meant *lay* as opposed to *clerical*—*laewede* (derived in some way from *laicus*) as opposed to *lered* (learned). Thus, Chaucer has:

> "For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
> No wonder is a lewed man to ruste." (*Prol.* 501–2.)

and

> "For he be lewed man, or ellis lered,
> He noot how soone that he shal been afered."
> (*Doc.'s Tale*, 283–4.)

The gradual pejoration of the word is easily understood.

liberal, licentious, too free in conduct. The less favourable senses are easily derived from the original idea of freedom—Lat. *liberalis*, pertaining to a free man.

liege, sovereign. O.F. *lige* from O.H.G. *ledig*, free. Thus the *liege lord* was the supreme *free man*, who gave chartered freedom to his vassals or *lieges*.

list, choose. A.S. *lystan*, to please. Originally impersonal as in "Whan hem lyst, thei remewen to other Cytees" (Mandeville); and in Chaucer:

"Strong was the wyn and wel to drynke us leste." (*Prol.* 750.)

luxurious, lustful.

meet, quits. To be *meet* with any one is to be of the same *measure*—to be equal, or to be *even* with him, as we say now.

misgovernment, personal irregularity of conduct, a sense now obsolete.

misprision, mistake. O.F. *mesprision* = Lat. *minus* + *prehensionem*; *misprising*, contempt, is from the O.F. verb *mespriser* (*mépriser*) = *minus* + *pretiare*.

misuse (II. 2. 25), mislead. O.F. *mesuser* (*mésuser*).

moe, more, from O.E. *ma* (adv.) = more: *more* is from O.E.

māra (adj.) = greater. Strictly, *moe* indicates number, *more* extent—that is, we should say *many moe* and *much more*.

nice, precise, fastidious. Originally *foolish*, *weak*, *simple*, from Lat. *nescius*, ignorant, stupid. The meaning has developed strangely; but the sense of *precision* is perhaps kept in such a phrase as "Come nice and early."

noble, a gold coin worth 6*s*. 8*d*., first minted by Edward III. See *angel*.

odd, eccentric, peculiar, strange—either in appearance or behaviour. *N.E.D.* says: "M.E. *odde*, from Old Norse *odda* in comb. in *odda-mann* (accus.) third-man, odd-man, who gives the casting vote, *odda-tala* odd number, in which *odda-* is genitive or comb. form of *oddi*, 'point, angle, triangle,' whence 'third or odd number.'...The sense seems to have been extended from the third or unpaired member of a group of three, to any single or unpaired member of a group, and from 3 as the primary odd number to all numbers containing an unpaired unit. But this development was anterior to English use as recorded in documents."

orchard, garden. A.S. *ortgeard*—apparently a double formation from Lat. (*h*)*ortus*, garden, and A.S. *geard*, yard, garth. Weekley suggests a possible derivation from *wort*, herb + *geard*—A.S. *wyrtgeard*. The important point, however, in the present play is that *orchard* means *garden*, and not a place given over to the culture of fruit-trees.

pack'd, leagued—in the same pack or gang.

pent-house, a "lean-to." "Folk-etymology for earlier *pentice*, *pentis*, aphetic for Fr. *appentis* from *appendre*, to hang to. Association with Fr. *pente*, slope, has introduced the idea of sloping, whence *pent-roof*" (Weekley). *Pent-house*, it should be noted, is very old—at least as old as the fourteenth century.

pleached, interlaced, intertwined, plaited; thus something formed by the interlacing of boughs and twigs, e.g. an arbour or garden-alley. M.E. *pleche*, from the conjectural O.F. *plechier*. A cognate form is *plash*, derived through the Fr. from Lat. *plectere*, to plait, interweave. *Drake's Voyage* (1595) has, "the trees which they had plasshed to make theyr palizadoe." But the other form has endured longer, thanks to the Shakespearean impetus. See *Ant. and Cleo.* IV. 14. 73:

> "Would'st thou be window'd in great Rome and see
> Thy master thus with pleach'd arms, bending down
> His corrigible neck, etc."

politic (v. 2. 58), cunning, crafty. Derived ultimately from πολιτικός, pertaining to the State (πόλις, the city). The degradation of the word is easily understood.

possess (v. 1. 269), inform—a frequent Shakespearean use. The sense is "to put one in the possession of information."

practise, to play tricks, to delude, to plot. Rare, if not obsolete, now in this sense. One odd modern use is Newman's "Photius considers his works have been practised upon by heretics."

predestinate, fore-ordained. For a long account of the suffix *-ate*, see *N.E.D. ad loc.* A brief statement is given earlier in the notes.

prolonged (iv. 1. 252), put off, postponed (late Lat. *prolongare*). Not a common use.

promise (I promise thee), assure. Perhaps a development of *promise* used as a threat.

proper, handsome, used literally or ironically, like the modern "he's a fine fellow."

propose, conversation. To "propose" is to put something forward for discussion. Thus *proposing* (iii. 1. 3) is *discussing*, or *conferring* or *conversing*, and *propose* (or *purpose*) is conversation. In Eng. this is obsolete; but the Fr. *propos* is current.

quaint, ingenious, elaborate, beautiful, fine, elegant. The sense of "prettily old-fashioned" is modern. It appears in numerous forms, *cointe*, *coynte*, *quoynt*, *queynte*, *queint* (in Q. of present play). From O.F. *cointe* (*quointe*, etc.), *quiente*—Lat. *cognitum*, known. "The development of the main senses took place in O.F. and is not free from obscurity. In its older senses the English word seems to have been in ordinary use down to the 17th century, though in many 16th–17th cent. examples the exact meaning is difficult to determine" (*N.E.D.*). The modern use came in about 1800.

queasy, unsettled, troubled, unhealthy (and here) bilious or easily upset, applied to the digestive organs. It occurs in such forms as *coisy*, *coysy*, *queysy*, *quaisie*. Origin obscure.

quips, jests, gibes. Perhaps a shortened form of Lat. *quippe*, indeed, surely; but possibly a coinage, representing a blend of *quibble* (from the abbreviation of *quibus* in legal documents) and such brisk words as *nip*, *whip*, etc. See 1 *Hen. IV*, 1. 2. 50: "How now, how now, mad wag! what, in thy quips and thy quiddities?"

quirks, quips, quibbles, jokes. It appears in such forms as *quircke*, *queerk*, *quirt*. Of obscure origin and history.

quondam, former—here (v. 2. 32) in the sense of *ancient*, belonging to "once-upon-a-time." It is the Lat. adverb *quondam, formerly*, used adjectivally. A notable use by Shakespeare is in *Hen. V*, ii. 1. 82:

> "I have, and I will hold, the quondam Quickly
> For the only she."

robato, stiffening or support of ruff or collar, also the ruff or collar itself. It occurs in such forms as *rebatu*, *rabato*, *rebata*. From O.F. *rabat*, a collar. *N.E.D.* quotes Dent's *Pathway to Heaven* (1601): "These great ruffs, which are borne up with supporters and rebatoes, as it were with post and rail."

rochato. A horn call to bring the hounds together; also *recheat*. Probably from O.F. verb *rachater*, *racheter*, to re-assemble, to rally. *N.E.D.* quotes Cockaine's *Treatise on Hunting* (1590): "The rechate, with three winds, the first, one long and five short, the second one long and one short, the third, one long and sixe short."

reclusive, marked by reclusion or retirement; reclusive life = the life of a recluse. The use is rare.

reechy, fouled, begrimed, smoky, dark, dirty. *N.E.D.* quotes Blount, *Boscobel* (1660): "His face and hands made of a reechy complexion by the help of the Walnut-tree leaves." The verb and substantive *reek*, meaning *smoke*, occur in varying forms in most Teut. languages. "As the word has chiefly survived in northern use the palatalized form *reech* is comparatively rare" (*N.E.D.*).

reprove (II. 3. 215), rebut, disprove, refute. Lat. *re* + *probare*.

rheum, tears, "restored from M.E. *rewme*, O.F. *reume* (*rhume*), L., Gr. ῥεῦμα, flow" (Weekley). Used several times by Shakespeare.

salved, made smoother. The substantive *salve* (O E. *sealf*) is probably derived ultimately from some pre-Teutonic word meaning oil or clarified butter.

scab, used with double-meaning, (1) a rascal, (2) the crust on a sore. From O Norse *skabbr*, corresponding to O.E. *sceabb*, from which comes the cognate word *shab*, now obsolete. From the original root we get the Latin *scabies*, *scabere*: *shave* is a cognate word. The root idea is *scratch*. Sense (1) still survives, or has been revived, in U.S. where it means a "blackleg"—a non-unionist, one who works while his comrades are on strike.

scambling, disorderly, struggling pushing. Origin uncertain; perhaps the earlier form of *scrambling*. Cotgrave has: "*Griffe graffe*, By hook or by crook, squimble, squamble, scramblingly, catch that catch may." Shakespeare uses *scamble* (in various forms) two or three times, but not *scramble*.

shrewd, originally, *malignant*, *depraved*, *malicious*, *wicked*. The sense gradually weakens to *mischievous*, *sharp*, *clever*, and is applied in the special sense of *sharp* to the railing or scolding tongue of women. Whether connected with *shrew* (*Sorex vulgaris*) is disputed.

slops, "loose outer garments. A.S. *slop* in *oferslop*, probably cognate with *slip*. In 16th–17th cents. often in the sense of baggy breeches. Cf. Fr. *salopette*, workman's slop, of Teut. origin. 'The business of slopps, wherein the seaman is so much abused by the pursers.' Pepys, Mar. 16, 1662'" (Weekley). The recent war has made us familiar with *slacks* for trousers, in contrast to the tight puttee.

smirched, smeared, stained. Doubtless associated with *smear*. Rabelais uses *esmorche*, which Cotgrave exactly defines.

sort, originally *lot*—that which is determined by fate or destiny; thus it comes to mean *rank* or *high condition*:

> "God save ye!
> For less I cannot wish to men of sort
> And of your seeming."
> (Fletcher, *Noble Gentleman*.)

Fr. *sorte*, from vulg Lat. *sorta* = Lat. *sors*.

squarer, quarrelsome fellow. Noun formed from verb, *to square*, in the sense of *to quarrel*. We still use *to square up*, meaning to put the hands and arms in the attitude of a boxer. In *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, II. 1. 27, we have:

> "And now they never meet in grove, or greene,
> By fountain clear, or spangled star-light sheen,
> But they do square, that all their Elves for fear
> Creep into Acorn cups and hide them there."

O.F. *esquerre* (*équerre*, carpenter's square), vulg. Lat. *exquadra*, from *quadrus*, from *quatuor*, four. Cotgrave has, "*se carrer*, to square it; to look stately, surly, or big on't."

stale, n., an unclean woman; a special substantive sense of the adjective. O.F. *estale*, verbal adj. of *estaler* (*étaler*), from O.H.G. *stal*, a fixed place.

stomach, Fr. *estomac*, Lat. *stomachus*, Gr. *στόμαχος*, throat, gullet, from *στόμα*, mouth. The older Eng. forms are, *stomack, stomake, stomoke*, etc. The development of the word is easily followed—from gullet, where food is swallowed, to the organ where food is received; then fig. appetite, desire, inclination; then, inclination in the wider sense; and so, courage, spirit, pride, haughtiness—uses familiar in Tudor English.

stood out, rebelled. The development of the sense is easily followed; *to stand* in general becomes *to stand fast* in a particular attitude, *to stand firm*, or resist, *to stand on one side* of a dispute, *to stand out*, or resist, and so on. We get it from A.S. *standan*. The Teut. forms are cognate with *stare* and *ἱστάναι*.

strain, descent. A.S. *strēon, gestrēon*, gain, procreation. In M.E. it appears as *streen, strene, stren*. The current spelling is

due to confusion with the different word *to strain*, which is from O.F. *estreindre* (Lat. *stringere*).

subscribe (v. 2. 54), write him down, declare (Lat. *sub* + *scribere*); literally, to attest by signing one's name.

tabor, tambourine, or small drum, but without the "jingles" of the modern tambourine. O.F. *tabour* (mod. form *tambour*). The intruded *m* may be due to *tympanum*; "of Oriental origin; cf. Persian *tabīrah*, *tabūrāk*, drum....Prob. imitative" (Weekley).

tartly, sourly. Of *tart* Weekley writes: "A.S. *teart*, severe (of punishment, etc.), only found once in M.E. in a passage of doubtful meaning, but common from 16 cent. in lit. and fig. senses. (?) Cogn. with *tear* (as *bitter* with *bite*). The gaps in its history want fill ng up." Shakespeare uses *tart* twice (*King Lear*, *Ant. and Cleo.*), *tartly* once (in this play), *tartness* twice (*All's Well*, *Coriol.*).

tax, censure; also, task—"Tax not so bad a voice" = "Task not, etc." The verb is earlier than the noun. F. *taxer*, L. *taxare*, to reckon, censure. *Tax* and *task* are synonymous in M.E.—indeed, they are the same word, for O. Norm. *tasque* (O.F. *tasche*) is a metathesis of *taxe*.

tire, a head-dress; a confusion of *tiar*, a head-dress and *tire*, the aphetic form of *attire*. *Tiara* is of Persian origin and comes through the Greek.

trencherman, *trench* is from O.F. *trenche* (*tranche*), a slice; *trencher* is *trencheoir* (*tranchoir*), cutting-board, or wooden platter; a *trencher-man* is an eater—one who "plays a good (or bad) knife and fork."

troth, a variant of *truth*. A.S. *trēowth*. See *trow*. In pronunciation the vowel should be long, as in *betroth*.

trow, wonder. A.S. *trēowian*, to trust or believe, from *trēow*, faith, belief; cognate with *true*.

"Then repentant they gave cry,
O my heart that trow'd mine eye!"
(Greene, *Isabel's Ode*.)

In the form *I trow* it is little more than an exclamation.

tuition, keeping. A.F. *tuycioun*, O.Fr. *tuicion*, M.E. *tuicyon*, *tuycyon*; from Lat. *tuitio* (*tueri*). Examples of the present use are frequent, e.g.: "Humbly desiring pardon of your honour for my tediousness, I leave your lordship to the tuition of the Almighty" (Hakluyt). "As I can I shall commend you unto the tuition of our Shepherd Christ" (John Bradford, *Letters*).

unconfirmed (III. 3. 110), inexperienced, not yet hardened.

untowardly, neg. of *towardly*, which is the opposite of *frowardly*. The sense is clear from the prefixes. The *-ward* is

from A.S. *weard*, cognate with *weorthan*, to become, and with Lat. *vertere*, to turn.

varlet, a low, contemptible rascal, a menial. The word is a remarkable instance of degradation. The original O.F. is *vaslet*. Cotgrave explains at length: "In old time it was a more honourable title; for all young gentlemen, untill they came to be eighteen years of age, were (as at this day Batchelers in *Britain* are) termed so; besides those that waited in the Kings Chamber (and who were, for the most, gentlemen) had no other title than that of *Valets de Chambre*, untill that *Frances* the first perceiving such as attended him to be no better than *Roturiers*, brought in, above them, another sort, and caused them to be stiled, *Gentilshommes de sa chambre*: presently after which the Title of Valet grew into disesteem, and is, at the length, become opposite unto that of *Gentilhomme*. Look *Varlet*." And under *varlet* he writes: "A Groom, &c. as *Valet*; also a yonker, stripling, youth; as in the Proverb: *Autant se prise beau varlet que belle fille;* Pro.

The smirking youth as much himself esteems,
As doth the Nymph who beauty fairest seems."

victual, "restored from *vittle*, M.E. and O.F. *vitaille* (victuaille), Lat. *victualia*, neut. pl. taken as fem. sing. from *victus*, food" (Weekley).

vouchsafe, allow, grant. Properly two words separately inflected—"to guarantee as safe."

"That the quen be of-sent, sauf wol i fouche."
(*William of Palerne*, 4152.)

"So Philip is wild, on that wise we it take,
As ye have mad present, the king vouches it safe."
(*Robert of Brunne*.)

weeds, garments. Now obsolete except in *widow's weeds*. A.S. *wǣde*, *wǣd*, a garment. Shakespeare uses the singular in "Weed of Athens he doth wear" (*Midsummer-Night's Dream*).

APPENDIX

BANDELLO'S STORY

Translated for the Present Work by Grace Sampson

Novelle, Parte Prima, Novella xxii

Tells how Signor Timbreo of Cardona, being with King Peter of Aragon in Messina, fell in love with Fenicia Lionata; and the varied and ill-starred events which happened before he took her to wife.

In the year of our salvation 1283, the Sicilians, finding themselves no longer able to endure the dominion of the French, one day at the hour of vespers slaughtered with unheard-of cruelty all of that nation who were in the island; which act of treachery had been agreed upon by the whole community. Not only were men and women of French nationality killed, but all Sicilian women who were found to have been intimate with Frenchmen suffered death on the same day; and afterwards any woman who was proved to be bearing the child of a Frenchman was killed without mercy. Whence came the unhappy fame of the Sicilian Vespers. On hearing the news King Peter of Aragon immediately went with an army and took possession of the island, Pope Nicholas III urging him on, and saying that, as the husband of Gostanza, daughter of King Manfred, he was the rightful ruler. So for many days King Peter kept very royal and magnificent court in Palermo, and to celebrate his conquest of the island made a wonderful feast. Then, hearing that King Charles II, son of Charles I, ruler of Naples, was coming by sea with a large army to hunt him out of Sicily, he went to meet him with all the armed vessels and galleys that he had. There followed a confused hand-to-hand fight with terrible slaughter, but in the end King Peter defeated Charles's forces and took him prisoner. In order that he might better control his military affairs he removed the Queen, with all the Court, to Messina, as that city is in touch with Italy, and by a short passage one can reach Calabria. There, while he kept a brilliant court, with balls and tournaments every day, all being made more joyous by the splendid victory, one of his knights, a baron of high repute, whom, for his noble courage and because in past wars he had always borne himself valiantly, King Peter esteemed in the highest degree, fell passionately in love with the young daughter of Ser Lionato of the Lionati, a gentleman of Messina. Beyond

all other ladies of the country was she gentle, attractive, and beautiful, and little by little the knight's love for her grew to such a burning passion that without the sweet sight of her he neither could, nor wished, to live. His name was Signor Timbreo of Cardona, and the maiden was called Fenicia. Because from his youth up he had always served the King both by land and sea, he had been richly rewarded and, besides the countless gifts he had already received, the King at this time had given him the demesne of Collisano, with other property, so that his fortune, without the grant he had from the King, was more than twelve thousand ducats a year. And now Signor Timbreo began to walk every day before the house of his lady, and accounted himself blessed on those days when he had sight of her. Fenicia, who, although but a girl, was discerning and wise, quickly understood the reason for the constant passing to and fro of the cavalier. It was well known that Signor Timbreo was one of the closest favourites of the King and that there were few in the court so highly valued as he; whereby he was honoured of all. Fenicia, therefore, hearing him thus spoken of, seeing him nobly clad and attended by an honourable following, and seeing besides that he was young and handsome, and showed himself well-mannered, began to look upon him favourably and modestly to give him her regard. The cavalier became more ardent every day, and the more he gazed at her the more brightly burnt the flame; until this new fire in his heart so consumed all other feelings but love for the beautiful maid, that he sought every possible means of winning her. But all to no purpose! Because however many letters, messages and envoys he sent her, she made no other reply than that she meant to keep herself inviolate for him who should be her husband. So the poor lover found himself in an evil case; and all the more so because he had never been able to persuade her to keep either letters or gifts. Determined to win her by any means, and seeing her constancy to be such as to make it necessary for him to wed her if he would possess her, he concluded, after much deliberation with himself, to ask her of her father in marriage. And although this seemed to him a condescension, yet, knowing her to come of an ancient and honourable family, he determined to delay no longer, such was the ardour of his passion. Having come to this resolution he sought out a gentleman of Messina whom he knew intimately, and to him he unburdened his soul, laying upon him the charge of approaching Ser Lionato. So to him went the gentleman of Messina and faithfully discharged his mission according to the knight's commands. Ser Lionato, knowing in what high honour and authority Signor Timbreo was held, heard the proposal with great pleasure; and without

asking counsel of either relatives or friends, showed by his grateful assent how much he appreciated the knight's willingness to make an alliance with his family. Being returned to his house, he made known to his wife and to Fenicia the promise given to the knight. Fenicia was greatly pleased and, outwardly joyous, with devout heart thanked God who had granted such a glorious consummation to her chaste love. But fortune, who never allows us to enjoy an undiluted blessing, found a new way of placing an impediment between these two, so desirous of marriage. Listen to the manner of it! It had become known throughout Messina that in a few days Signor Timbreo of Cardona was to wed Fenicia, daughter of Ser Lionato. The news pleased the Messinese generally, for Ser Lionato was a gentleman beloved by everybody as one who never sought to injure any, and gave what help he could to all; so that everyone showed great delight. There was in Messina another cavalier, young and of noble family, named Signor Girondo Olerio Valenziano, who had proved himself valiant in the late war and was one of the most splendid and liberal of the courtiers. Hearing the news he was filled with jealousy, because a little while before he had himself become enamoured of Fenicia's beauty, and so fiercely burnt the flame of love in his breast that he felt he would die if he could not wed Fenicia. As he had resolved to ask her of her father in marriage, one may believe with what an agony of affliction he heard of the promise made to Signor Timbreo; and in his grief, becoming frantic with the passion of stifled love, and not having been able to find any other means of relief, he allowed himself to be so carried away as to commit an act which anyone, let alone a knight and a gentleman, would condemn. In the military operations he had been almost always the companion of Signor Timbreo and there existed between them a brotherly affection. But, whatever may have been the reason, they had hidden from each other their passion for Fenicia. Signor Girondo, then, set himself to think how he could sow such dissension between Signor Timbreo and his lady that the marriage compact would be broken; and, in that event, he could ask her father for her hand in marriage with hope of his consent. He was not long in changing his frenzied thought into deed. Having found a man willing to minister to his blind and unbridled appetites, he carefully unfolded to him his desire. This confidant and servant of his wickedness was a young courtier, a man of little worth, and one who was better pleased with evil than with good. So, being thoroughly instructed in the plot he was to weave, he went the next morning to find Signor Timbreo, who had not yet gone forth, but was walking in the grounds of his inn. The young man entered the garden, and

Signor Timbreo, seeing him approach, received him courteously. Whereupon after the usual salutations the youth began to speak to Signor Timbreo in this fashion, My lord, I am come at this hour to tell you something of great importance, something which concerns not only your interest, but your honour. And since I may, perhaps, say something which will offend you, I beg you to forgive me, to pardon my presumption and believe that I am moved by a good intent. This I know well, that, if you would remain the honoured knight you have always been, what I am going to tell you will be of great service to you. Now to come to the fact; yesterday I heard that you have agreed with Ser Lionato of the Lionati to take to wife his daughter Fenicia. Beware, my lord, what you do and have a care of your honour. I speak thus because a gentleman, a friend of mine, goes sometimes two and three times in the week to visit her and enjoy her love. This evening, in the same way, he is going there and I, as at other times, shall accompany him thither. If you will give me your word, and swear not to vent your anger on me or on my friend, I will arrange that you yourself shall see the place and the whole affair. And you must know that for many months my friend has thus enjoyed her. My service with you, and the many benefits you have graciously conferred upon me, have induced me to make this known to you. You can now profit by it as seems best to you; for me it is enough to have performed the office that my duty to you demanded. At these words Signor Timbreo was so stunned and beside himself that he almost lost his senses. After remaining some time distracted by a thousand conflicting thoughts, and being more moved by bitterness and what seemed to him a righteous indignation than by fervent and loyal love for the fair Fenicia, he, sighing, thus replied to the young man. My friend, I ought not, and cannot but remain eternally obliged to you, seeing with what goodwill you have cared for me and for my honour, and some day I will show you to more purpose how much I am bound to you. However, for the present, I render you all the thanks in my power. And since you have frankly offered to bring me to see that which I could never even have imagined, I beg you, by the charity which made you divulge this thing to me, freely to accompany your friend; and I swear by my faith as an honourable knight not to harm either you or your friend, and to keep this thing always under the seal of secrecy so that your friend may enjoy his love undisturbed. For I ought to have been more cautious before in carefully scrutinising the whole matter. Then said the young man, at last, to Signor Timbreo, My lord, to-night at three o'clock you must go towards Ser Lionato's house, and in the ruins of a building opposite the

garden of the said Ser Lionato, place yourself in ambush. Overlooking that side was one face of Lionato's palace where there was an old room, at the windows of which, open day and night, Fenicia was wont to appear, because the beauty of the garden could be better enjoyed from that side; but Ser Lionato and the family lived in the other wing, for the palace was old and very big, capable of holding not merely the retinue of a gentleman, but the court of a prince. Now having made the aforesaid arrangement the deceitful youth departed and went to find the perfidious Girondo, to whom he related how he had made the appointment with Signor Timbreo. Whereupon Signor Girondo greatly rejoiced, for it seemed to him that his design would succeed to perfection. When the appointed hour arrived, the treacherous Girondo caused one of his servants, whom he had already instructed as to what he had to do, to be richly dressed and sweetly perfumed with delicate odours. Away went the scented lackey, accompanied by the young man who had spoken to Signor Timbreo, and closely followed by another who bore a ladder on his shoulder. What was the state of Signor Timbreo's soul and what thoughts passed through his mind during the day, who can tell? I know that, for my part, I should tire myself in vain. Blinded by the veil of jealousy, the unhappy and too credulous lord had eaten little or nothing all day. And whoever looked in his face thought him more dead than alive. Half-an-hour before the appointed time, he went and hid himself among the ruins in such a way that he could clearly see anyone who passed, although it seemed to him impossible that Fenicia should yield her treasure to others. Then he told himself that maidens are changeable, frivolous, unstable, contemptible and greedy for anything new; and now condemning, now excusing her, he remained attentive to every movement. The night was tranquil and not very dark. By and by he began to hear the scraping sound of the footsteps of people coming, and to hear also, but imperfectly, some muttered words. As he saw the three pass by he knew again the youth he had seen in the morning, but the other two he could not recognise. While the three made their way past him, he heard the one who was perfumed and clothed like a lover say to the one who carried the ladder, See that you place the ladder so carefully at the window that you do not make a sound, because on the last occasion my lady Fenicia told me that you had placed it too noisily. Do it deftly and quietly. These words were clearly heard by Signor Timbreo, to whose heart they struck like so many sharp and stinging darts. And although he was alone and unarmed except for a sword, and those who passed had, besides swords, two lances and perhaps wore armour, nevertheless so

fierce and biting was the jealousy that gnawed his heart, and so great the anger that inflamed him, that he was near leaving his hiding place to assail them furiously and to kill the one whom he judged to be Fenicia's lover; or, himself being killed, to end in a moment all the distress and exceeding pain that he was so grievously enduring. But remembering his sworn promise and the great vileness and wickedness of attacking those who had confided in his word, full of anger, indignation, wrath and fury, and eating his heart out, he awaited the end of the affair. The three, arrived before the window of Ser Lionato's house on the side already mentioned, very gently leaned the ladder against the balcony, and the one who represented the lover mounted it and entered the chamber as if confident of his reception. Which, when the disconsolate Signor Timbreo had witnessed, firmly believing that the man who had mounted had gone to be with Fenicia, he was struck with such great affliction that he was on the point of swooning. But so powerful in him was his just anger, as he believed it, that, overcome by jealousy, the fervent and sincere love he had borne Fenicia not only cooled, but was changed to bitter hatred. Then, not wishing besides to wait until his rival should again pass outside the place where he was hidden, he quitted it and returned to his inn. The young man, who had seen him go away and clearly recognised him, rightly construed what had happened. He therefore after a little while gave the signal, and the servant who had climbed up descended, and away they went together to the house of Signor Girondo to whom they narrated the whole story. Whereupon he rejoiced greatly and seemed to himself to be already the possessor of the beautiful Fenicia. Signor Timbreo, who had slept but little during what remained of the night, arose at an early hour, sent for the Messinese citizen by whose agency he had asked Fenicia of her father in marriage, and instructed him in what he desired him to do. The Messinese, fully informed of the mind and heart of Signor Timbreo and urged to it by him, at the hour of dinner went to find Ser Lionato, who, waiting for dinner to be announced, was pacing the chamber where, similarly, was the innocent Fenicia who, in company with her two younger sisters and her mother, was embroidering certain pieces of silk. The citizen, having come thither and having been graciously received by Ser Lionato, spoke thus: Ser Lionato, I come as a messenger from Signor Timbreo to you, to your lady, and to Fenicia. You are welcome, replied he, And what is it? Wife, and you, Fenicia, come and listen with me to the message that Signor Timbreo sends us. Then the messenger spoke in this fashion, It is commonly said that he who acts as an ambassador, reporting only what he has

been commanded, ought not to suffer injury. I come to you, sent hither by another, and it grieves me much that I bring you painful news. Signor Timbreo of Cardona to you, Ser Lionato, and to your Lady, sends saying that you must provide yourselves with another son-in-law, because he does not intend to have you as his parents by marriage; not for anything lacking in you, whom he believes and holds to be honourable and good; but because with his own eyes he has seen in Fenicia a quality he would never have believed her to possess. And therefore he leaves you to provide for yourselves elsewhere. To you, Fenicia, he says that the love he bore you did not deserve the recompense you have given it, and that, as you have provided yourself with another lover, you must provide yourself with another husband, or, take that one to whom you have yielded your virginity; for himself he does not mean to have any further dealings with you, since you would have been false to him even before he became your husband. On hearing this bitter and outrageous message Fenicia became as one dead. It was the same with Ser Lionato and his Lady. However, recalling with an effort his almost swooning senses, Ser Lionato said to the messenger, Brother, I always doubted from the first moment when you spoke to me of this marriage that Signor Timbreo would remain firm in his request, because I understood, and know well enough, that I am a poor gentleman and not his equal. Nevertheless, it seems to me that if he had repented of his offer to wed my daughter, it would have been sufficient for him to say that he no longer desired her; and he ought not to have laid upon her this vile stain of wanton, as he has done. It is very true that anything is possible, but I know how my daughter has been brought up and how she conducts herself. God, the just judge, will one day, I hope, enable us to know the truth. With this reply the citizen set out, and Ser Lionato remained convinced that Signor Timbreo had repented of making the alliance, considering that perhaps it would be too great an abasement and betrayal of his nobility. Ser Lionato came of a family ancient and noble and honourably known in Messina, but his means were only those of a private gentleman; yet old men remembered that his forbears had had much land and castles with wide jurisdiction. But owing to the changes in the island wrought by the civil war they were fallen from their high estate, as was to be seen in many other families. Now the worthy father, never having seen anything dishonourable in his daughter, thought that the knight disdained to take her because of their poverty and present lowly fortune. On the other hand, Fenicia, who through extreme grief and agony of heart had swooned, feeling herself the victim of some great wrong, and being too delicately nurtured to

endure the blows of a malign fate, abandoning herself, thought death more desirable than life. Thus, wounded by deep and penetrating sorrow, she remained as if dead; and quickly losing her natural hue resembled a marble statue rather than a living creature. Thereupon she was lifted bodily and laid upon a bed, where with warm cloths and other remedies her wandering senses were after a while recovered. The doctors being summoned, the news spread through Messina that Fenicia, daughter of Ser Lionato, was grievously ill and like to die. Upon this came many gentlewomen, relatives and friends, to visit the unhappy Fenicia; and learning the cause of her illness endeavoured, as well as they could, to console her. And, as it usually happens among a crowd of women, many remarks were made upon this pitiful case, but all agreed in blaming Signor Timbreo with bitter reproof. Most of them were round the stricken girl's bed, when Fenicia, having quite well understood what was said, and seeing that nearly all were weeping out of pity for her, made an effort, and in a weak voice begged them to quiet themselves, and then feebly spoke thus, Honoured mother and sisters, dry these tears, since to you they can give no aid, and to me they are fresh cause of pain, and in this sad case profit no one. It is proper and pleasing to God that we should have patience. The grief which I feel so acutely, and which is, little by little, severing the thread of my life, is, not that I should be repudiated, though that grieves me infinitely, but that I should be repudiated in this way. That is what has wounded me to the point of death and utterly broken my heart. Could Signor Timbreo but have said that I did not please him for a wife, all would have been well; but, owing to the manner of his refusal, I know well that among the Messinese I shall be for ever blamed for a sin that I not only did not commit, but did not even dream of. I shall be pointed at as a wanton. I have always admitted, and I confess anew, that my rank was not equal to that of such a knight and baron as Signor Timbreo, and that one of my poor having could not aspire to so great a marriage. But for nobility and antiquity of blood, one knows that the Lionati are the most noble and ancient of any in the island, we being descended from a noble Roman family since before the coming of Christ, as is proved by ancient writings. Now, while I say that through my poverty I was unworthy of such a knight, so I also say that unworthily was I cast off, seeing that it is very clear that I have never thought of giving to another what, by right, should be reserved for my husband. That I speak truth God is my witness, to whose holy name be always honour and reverence. And who knows if by this means His divine majesty wishes to save me? Perhaps in making so high an alliance I might

have risen in pride too, and become contemptuous of this and that, and should have become less conscious of God's goodness towards me. Now may God do to me what is most pleasing to Him and grant that this affliction may save my soul. I pray reverently, and with all my heart, that He will open Signor Timbreo's eyes; not that he may take me again for wife, because I feel life slowly sinking in me, but in order that he to whom my faith has been worthless, together with all the world, should know that I have never committed that folly and wicked sin of which, against all reason, I am accused; so that if I die under this disgrace, at some time I may be found guiltless. May he enjoy that other lady whom God has destined for him, and with her live long and peacefully. For me, in a few hours a few feet of earth will be enough. And you my father and my mother and all my friends and relatives, amid so much pain, take at least this small consolation, that I am innocent of the sin ascribed to me, and, for I can at this moment give no greater pledge or testimony in the world, take for witness my faith which I give you as a dutiful daughter should. It is enough for me that before the just tribunal of the All-Knowing Saviour I shall be held innocent of such sin. And so to Him who gave it me I commend my soul, which, desirous of quitting this earthly prison, wings its way towards Him. This said, so heavy was the grief which pressed upon her heart and fiercely constrained it, that she, wishing to say I know not what besides, began to lose the power of speech and to murmur indistinguishable words that no one understood. At the same time a cold sweat spread over all her members, whereupon, crossing her hands, she yielded herself to death. The doctors, who were still there, not having been able to relieve in any way such terrible sorrow, abandoned her as one dead, and, saying that the bitterness of grief had been so great that it had broken her heart, they quitted the house. Soon after, Fenicia, remaining cold and pulseless in the arms of her parents and friends, was by all judged to be dead. One of the doctors was again sent for, and he, finding no pulse, pronounced her dead. What piercing lamentations, what tears, what mournful sighs were given forth, I leave you, pitying women, to imagine. The tearful and unhappy father, the frantic and distracted mother would have made stones weep. All the other women, and everybody else who was there, made mournful lamentations. Five or six hours passed, and the burial was arranged for the following day. When the other women had departed, the mother, more dead than alive, and with her one of her relatives, wife of Ser Lionato's brother, these two together, not wishing any other person to be present, placed water on the fire, and, shutting themselves in the room,

undressed Fenicia and began to bathe her body with warm water. While they were laving the cold limbs, Fenicia's wandering senses which had been absent for about seven hours, returned to their office, and the maiden, giving manifest signs that she was still living, began at last to open her eyes. The mother and the relative were on the point of shrieking. However, taking courage, they placed their hands on her heart and felt that it made some movement. Upon which they were convinced that the girl was alive, and with hot cloths and other remedies, without proclaiming it to anyone, they almost entirely restored Fenicia, who, opening her eyes wide, said with a deep sigh, Ah! where am I? Do you not see—said her mother—that you are with me and with your aunt? You have been in such a deep swoon that we believed you dead; but praise be to God you are yet living. Alas! replied Fenicia, how much better it would be were I dead and out of all this misery. Dear child—said her mother and her aunt—since it is God's will, you must wish to live, and a remedy will be found for everything. The mother, concealing her joy, opened the door of the room a very little, and sent for Ser Lionato who came in haste. There is no need to ask if he were joyful at seeing his daughter returned to life. Turning over many things in his mind, he first desired that no one should be allowed to know aught of what had happened, as he had determined to send his daughter away from Messina to the country house of his brother whose wife was then present. When they had revived the maiden with delicate food and rare wine, so that her beauty and strength were fully restored, he sent for his brother and carefully explained what he wished him to do. They then arranged for the carrying out of their plan. Ser Girolamo, for so Ser Lionato's brother was called, was to take Fenicia to his house on the following night and there keep her secretly in his wife's care. So having made all the necessary arrangements at the villa, early next morning he sent his wife away, and with her Fenicia then sixteen, Fenicia's sister who was about fourteen and his own daughter. They did this thinking that in two or three years Fenicia, growing and changing in appearance as one does with time, could be married under another name. The day after the unhappy affair, the news that Fenicia was dead being spread throughout Messina, Ser Lionato appointed the obsequies according to his rank. He had a coffin made and into this, not being observed by any, and not wishing others to be concerned in the affair, Fenicia's mother put I know not what, and, closing the coffin, nailed it down and caulked it with pitch. Whereupon everyone thought unquestioningly that within it was the body of Fenicia. The evening being come, Ser Lionato and his relatives, clothed in black, accompanied the

coffin to the church, the father and mother exhibiting poignant grief, as if the body of their child had truly lain within the neighbouring coffin. Everyone was moved to pity, because, the reason of the death becoming known, all the Messinese held that the knight had invented the story. The coffin was lowered into the ground, with general mourning of the whole city, and a stone was placed above it on which were depicted the arms of the Lionati. Ser Lionato caused this epitaph, also, to be inscribed thereon:

Fenicia was my name: a cruel fate
  Affianced me unto a faithless knight,
  Who, soon repenting, sought to break his plight,
And charged me with a sin that lovers hate.
I, who was virgin still and innocent,
  Seeing my fame unjustly spotted o'er,
  And fingers pointing me one wanton more,
Rather did die than suffer such descent.

Since grief much sharper is than any steel,
  There needed not a weapon for my death,
Such pain of scorn my wounded heart did feel,
  Dying, I prayed God with my latest breath,
That He the truth to all men would reveal,
  As my false love cared nothing for my faith.

The mournful obsequies done, the reason of Fenicia's death was much spoken of everywhere, and many people discussing it, and all showing compassion for such a pitiful affair, and speaking of it as a plot, Signor Timbreo began to feel great grief, with a certain tightening of the heart which he could not have imagined. It seemed to him, still, that he ought not to have been blamed, he having seen a man mount the ladder and enter the house. Then carefully thinking over all that he had seen, and his previous anger being in great measure cooled, reason opened his eyes, and he said to himself that perhaps he who had entered the house might have been visiting another woman, or had climbed up to rob. He remembered, too, that Ser Lionato's house was large and that no one lived in the wing where the man had climbed up; and that it was hardly possible that Fenicia, sleeping with her sister in a room behind that of her father and mother, could have managed to pass by her parents' room to come to that side. Assailed and distressed by these thoughts he could find no rest. Similarly, Signor Girondo, hearing of the manner of Fenicia's death, and well knowing himself to have been the executioner and murderer of her whom he so ardently loved; and likewise knowing himself to have been

the real cause of so great a scandal, felt that his heart would burst with excess of grief; and two or three times, almost in despair, was about to thrust a dagger into his breast. And, unable either to eat or to sleep, from being gay and lively, he became like one possessed; and with every hour that he could get neither peace nor rest became more frenzied. At last, it being the seventh day after Fenicia's funeral, he felt that, if he did not confess to Signor Timbreo the crime which he had committed, he could no longer endure to live. So at the hour when everyone went home to dine, he went towards the King's palace and met Signor Timbreo who was going from the court to his lodging. To him Signor Girondo spoke thus, Signor Timbreo, would it trouble you to come with me to a place near by to render me a service? He, who had always been the affectionate companion of Signor Girondo, went with him, talking by the way of various things. In a few steps they came to the church where was Fenicia's tomb. Arrived there Signor Girondo commanded his servants that none of them should enter the church, and requested Signor Timbreo to issue the same orders to his men, which he at once did. Both then entered the church, in which there was no other person, and Signor Girondo, leading Signor Timbreo, directed his steps to the chapel in which was the pretended tomb. Entering, Signor Girondo knelt before the tomb and, unsheathing the sword he wore at his side, placed it thus bare in the hand of Signor Timbreo, who waiting, full of wonder, to know what this meant, had not yet seen before whose tomb Signor Girondo was kneeling. Then, full of sighs and tears, Signor Girondo spoke, Magnanimous and noble knight, having in my own judgment given you infinite offence, I am not come here to ask forgiveness, because my sin is so great that it cannot be pardoned. Therefore, if ever you have thought to do a thing worthy of your valour, if you think to behave as a true knight, if you desire to do a deed acceptable to God and man, plunge the steel that you hold in your hand into this sinful and treacherous breast, and with my unworthy and vicious blood make a fitting sacrifice to the holy remains of the innocent and unhappy Fenicia, who in this tomb was lately laid; for I am the sole malicious cause of her undeserved and untimely death. And if you, pitying me more than I pity myself, deny me this, I, with these hands, will take that revenge upon myself that I ought ultimately to suffer. But if you would be that true and noble knight that until now you have ever been, never permitting the least stain of dishonour, you will now take the due revenge for yourself and for the unfortunate Fenicia. Signor Timbreo, seeing that this was the tomb of Fenicia, and hearing the words spoken by Signor

Girondo, was stupefied, not being able to conceive what this could mean; and then, moved by I know not what emotion, began to weep bitterly, begging Signor Girondo that in pity he should rise and tell this story more clearly; and with that he flung the sword far from him. Then, so earnestly did he entreat, that Signor Girondo, in pity, rose still weeping and thus replied, You must know, my lord, that Fenicia was ardently beloved by me; so dearly did I love her that, if I live for countless years, never more shall I hope to find peace or solace, for that my love towards the unfortunate girl was the cause of her most bitter grievous death. Then, seeing that I could never gain from her a kind glance, not even the least sign to encourage my desires, when I heard that she was promised to you in marriage, blinded by my unbridled desire, I imagined that if I could find some way to prevent your marriage, I could then easily get her father's consent to wed her myself. Not being able to devise any other relief for my burning passion, and without considering the matter, I arranged a plot, the darkest in the world, and by a deception caused you to see the house entered at night by a man who was one of my servants. And he who came to tell you that Fenicia had given her love to another was employed by me in the whole affair, and instructed to show you where to watch. Then, the following day, Fenicia, cast off by you, died of grief and was entombed here. So, therefore, seeing that I, the slayer, the executioner and the cruel assassin, have so unpardonably injured both you and her, with arms thus crossed —and he once more kneeled down—I implore you to take a just revenge for the crime I have committed; all the more that, remembering of what a great injustice I have been the cause, I no longer desire to live. On hearing these things Signor Timbreo begun weeping very bitterly, and, believing that the wrong done was irreparable, and that Fenicia being dead he could not restore her to life, had no desire to revenge himself on Signor Girondo, but, pardoning him his fault, fell to thinking how Fenicia's good name could be cleared and how her honour, which had so causelessly and cruelly been reft from her, could be restored. He thereupon desired Signor Girondo to rise, and after many deep sighs and bitter tears spoke in this fashion. How much better had it been, my brother, if I had never been born, or, if I had to come into this world, that I had been born deaf, so that I could never have heard so heavy and afflicting a thing, for the which I shall never more be able to live at ease, remembering that through too much credulity I have caused the death of one whose love and whose qualities, those rare and excellent virtues and gifts that the king of heaven had gathered together in her, deserved some better reward than

an infamous accusation and an untimely death. But since it has been permitted by God, against whose will not a leaf moves on the tree, and since things done are more easily reprehended than amended, I have no desire for revenge; for losing friend upon friend I should but suffer grief upon grief; nor, for all this, will the blessed soul of Fenicia return to the pure body from which it has fled. For one thing only I will rebuke you, so that never more may you fall into a similar error. It is this, that you ought to have told me of your love, knowing that I, too, was enamoured of her, and was ignorant of your passion. Before asking her father for her I would have given place to you, and, suppressing my own wishes, as magnanimity and generosity are wont to do, would have placed our friendship before my desire, and then perhaps you, hearing my reasons, would have withdrawn from this enterprise; and thus the ensuing evil would not have come to pass. But the thing is done now and there is no remedy. So in this matter I ask you to comply with my request and do what I tell you. Whatever you command, my lord, said Signor Girondo, I will fully perform. I wish, added Signor Timbreo, that, since it is through us that Fenicia was wrongfully defamed as a wanton, we should both do our utmost to restore her good name and pay our debt of honour, first to her sorrowing parents, and next to all the people of Messina, because the story I told was so widely spread abroad, that all Messina may well believe her to be a wanton. Else I shall have continually before my eyes the vision of her angered spirit, always crying bitterly to God for vengeance upon me. To this Signor Girondo, weeping, immediately replied, My lord, it is yours to command and mine to obey. Once I was bound to you by friendship, now, through the wrong I have done, which as a noble and too merciful knight you have so graciously pardoned a perfidious villain, I remain eternally your servant and slave. This said, both of them bitterly weeping, again knelt before the tomb and with crossed arms besought pardon of Fenicia and of God; the one for the crime he had committed and the other for his too easy credulity. When they had dried their eyes, Signor Timbreo desired Signor Girondo to accompany him to Ser Lionato's house. They went together to the house and found that Ser Lionato had dined with some of his relatives, and had risen from the table. On hearing that these two lords wished to speak with him, full of wonder, he went to meet them and bade them welcome. The two knights, seeing Ser Lionato and his wife clothed in black, began to weep at this agonising reminder of Fenicia's death, and were scarcely able to speak. However, two guest-chairs being brought and everyone being seated, after some sighs and

groans, Signor Timbreo, in the presence of all there, narrated the sad tale of the cause of the pitiful and untimely death (as he believed) of Fenicia; and, with Signor Girondo, threw himself at her parents' feet imploring pardon for the crime. Ser Lionato, weeping with tenderness and joy, lovingly embraced them both, and granted them full pardon, thanking God that his daughter was known to be innocent. Signor Timbreo, after much deliberation, turned again to Ser Lionato and said, Signor Father, since evil fate has not willed me to become your son-in-law, as was my dearest hope, I beg of you with all earnestness that you should make the same use of me and my belongings as if the relationship had been accomplished; because I shall always hold you in that reverence and respect that an affectionate and obedient son should have for his father. And, if you deign to command me, you will find my deed as good as my word, for I know of nothing in the world so difficult that I would not do it for you. At this the good old man thanked Signor Timbreo with loving words, and finally said, Since so generously and courteously you make the offer, and an unkind fate has considered me unworthy of an alliance with you, I will venture to ask you something that will be easy for you to do; it is this, that, by the nobility that holds sway in you, and for whatever love you bore the unhappy Fenicia, when you wish to take a wife you will make it known, and that, upon my giving you a lady who will please you, you will accept her. It seemed to Signor Timbreo that the bereaved old man had asked small compensation for such a great loss, and, reaching forth his hand and kissing him on the lips, he replied, Signor Father, seeing that you require of me such a light matter, feeling that my obligation to you is much greater and desiring to show you how anxious I am to please you, I will not only not take any lady without your knowledge, but I will take as wife only her whom you give me, or counsel me to take. And this, by my faith, and in the presence of all these honourable gentlemen, I promise. Signor Girondo also spoke in the same generous manner, declaring himself ready at all times to serve Ser Lionato. This done, the two knights went to dinner, and the news was so widely spread throughout Messina that it was known to all that Fenicia had been unjustly accused. At the same time Fenicia was informed by a message from her father of what had taken place, upon which she rejoiced greatly and devoutly thanked God for the restoration of her honour. Now about a year had passed during which Fenicia had remained at the villa; and so well went the business that no one knew she was alive. During this time Signor Timbreo had kept in close relation with Ser Lionato, who, warning Fenicia of what he intended to do, gave orders

for the carrying out of his plan; meanwhile Fenicia had completed her seventeenth year and had become beautiful beyond belief. She had grown so that no one who saw her would have known her to be Fenicia, as all firmly believed her to be already dead. Her sister who was with her and was about fifteen years of age, Belfiore by name, seemed in truth a beautiful flower, and scarcely less lovely than her elder sister. Ser Lionato, who often went to see them, observing this, determined to delay no longer in carrying out his plan. So, being one day in the company of the two knights, he smilingly said to Signor Timbreo, The time has come, my lord, for you to release yourself from your obligation to me. I think I have found you a wife, a gentle and beautiful maiden with whom, as it seems to me, when you see her you will be well content. And if, perhaps, you take her with less fervour than you would have wedded Fenicia, I assure you that you will not take less beauty, less nobility or less sweetness. With other maidenly gifts, and gentle qualities she is, God be thanked, generously dowered and ornamented. You shall see her and then you can do whatever you think best. On Sunday morning I shall be at your inn accompanied by relatives and friends of my choice, and you, together with Signor Girondo, will be ready; because we must go out of Messina about three miles to a villa where we shall hear mass; you shall see the maiden of whom I have spoken, and then as a party of friends we will dine. Signor Timbreo accepted the invitation and the appointment, and on Sunday at an early hour placed himself, with Signor Girondo, in readiness to ride. Ser Lionato, who at the villa had already made all the fitting preparations, arrived with a company of gentlemen. As soon as Signor Timbreo was advised of Ser Lionato's coming, he, with Signor Girondo and his servants, mounted their horses, and, greetings given and received, the whole party set out from Messina. And, discoursing of divers things, as is usual in such cavalcades, without the way seeming long they arrived at the villa, where everything was in readiness and where they were courteously received. Then, having heard mass in a neighbouring church, they all returned to the house which was beautifully decked with Alexandrine tapestry and carpets. When they were all gathered in the house, there issued forth from one of the rooms a number of ladies, among whom were the two sisters, Fenicia resplendent as the moon shining in a serene heaven, more luminous than the stars. The two lords and the other noblemen received them with respectful greetings as gentlemen always should do with ladies. Ser Lionato then took Signor Timbreo by the hand and led him to Fenicia who had been called Lucilla ever since she had been taken to the villa. Behold, Sir Knight, he said, the Lady Lucilla

whom I have chosen to give you in marriage when it shall please you. And if you are of my mind she shall be your wife; nevertheless you are free to take or to leave her. Signor Timbreo looked at the giri who was in truth very beautiful, and being marvellously pleased at the first glance, and having already determined to satisfy Ser Lionato, after remaining silent a while said, Signor Father, not only do I accept her who is now presented to me and who seems a royal maiden, but any other you might have designed for me I would have taken. And in order that you may see how truly I desire to please you, and that you may know that the vow I made was not a vain one, this lady, and no other, I take for my lawful bride, if her wishes conform to mine. To these words the maiden replied, saying, Sir Knight, I am here ready to do whatever Ser Lionato commands. And I, fair maiden—added Ser Lionato—exhort you to take Signor Timbreo for your husband. Whereupon that there should be no doubt in the matter, he made a signal to a churchman who was there, that he should say the customary words according to the usage of Holy Church. The which he having duly performed, Signor Timbreo by those actual words wedded his Fenicia believing himself to have espoused one Lucilla. When he first saw the young girl come forth from the chamber he felt his heart thrill with I know not what emotion, and seeming to discern in her some likeness to his Fenicia, he gazed at her insatiably until he felt that all the love he had had for Fenicia was returning in full force for this new mistress. The ceremony done, water was quickly brought for the laving of hands, and the bride was placed at the head of the table. On the right side near her sat Signor Timbreo, opposite whom was Belfiore, and next to her came the knight Girondo. And thus, one by one, alternately were seated a lady and a gentleman. The viands were brought in an elegant and orderly manner, and all the guests were liberally, silently, and attentively served. Merry chatter, witty sayings and a thousand other diversions were not wanting. By and by, having partaken of the fruits of the season provided, Fenicia's aunt who, for the greater part of the year, had lived with her in the villa, and who was seated near Signor Timbreo at table, seeing that dinner was over, as if she knew nothing of the circumstances, said laughingly to Signor Timbreo, Sir Husband, have you ever been wedded before? Questioned in such a motherly way, he felt his eyes fill with tears, which fell before he could reply. Then, conquering a natural weakness, he answered in this fashion. Signora Aunt, your kindly meant question brings back to my mind a thing which so continually grieves my heart that it will soon end my days. And although I am well content with Lucilla, nevertheless for another whom I loved,

and whom, indeed, I love more than myself, I feel a canker of grief always gnawing at my heart and cruelly tormenting me, because without any doubt I was the sole cause of her most grievous death. At these words Signor Girondo, wishing to respond, and prevented by a thousand sighs and welling tears which fell drop by drop, at last brokenly said, My lord, I, traitor, was the real minister and instrument of the death of this unhappy lady, who by reason of her rare gifts deserved a longer life; you did no wrong, the guilt was mine alone. On hearing this the bride likewise felt her eyes fill with a rain of tears at the poignant remembrance of the bitter affliction she had suffered in the past. The aunt of the bride continued and questioned her nephews in these words. Ah, Sir Knight, of your courtesy, now that there is nothing else to talk of, tell me how came to pass a thing for which you and the other gentleman weep so tenderly. Alas! replied Signor Timbreo, do you wish me, Signora Aunt, to tell of the most painful and excruciating grief that I have ever borne, of which only to think tortures and racks me? But to please you I will tell you how, to my eternal sorrow and shame, I was too credulous. He then began to tell, not without scalding tears and great pain and to the wonder of the listeners, the whole miserable story. Whereupon the mother exclaimed, What a strange and terrible story you narrate, Sir Knight, the like of which will perhaps, never happen in the world again. But tell me, so God help you, if, before this lady here had been given you for wife, you had been able to bring back to life your loved mistress, what would you have done to be able to have her alive again? Signor Timbreo, still weeping, replied, I swear to God, my lady, that I am very well pleased with my betrothed and I hope as time goes on to be still more content. But if, before this, I had been able to recover the dead, I would have given half my life, beside the treasure I would have spent, to have her again; because truly I loved her as much as man has ever loved woman; and if I were to live thousands of years, her death would always be a bitter grief, and for love of her always would I honour her parents. At this the delighted father of Fenicia, not being able any longer to hide his pleasure, turning to his son-in-law and weeping tears of joy and tenderness said, What you say with your lips shows not well in your deed, Sir Son and son-in-law, for so I must call you, since having espoused your beloved Fenicia and having had her near you all the morning yet you have not recognised her. What has become of your fervent love? Has she changed so much in form and feature that, though she has been here with you, yet you have not known her? Immediately on hearing these words the eyes of the amorous knight were opened; and, throwing

himself on Fenicia's breast, breathing a thousand kisses and transported with joy, endlessly gazing with fixed looks and all the time weeping sweet tears of joy, he could not utter a word aloud, but could only inwardly accuse himself of his blindness. Ser Lionato then narrated how the affair had gone, all present being struck with wonder and greatly rejoicing together. Signor Girondo then, rising from the table, bitterly weeping, threw himself at the feet of Fenicia, humbly imploring her pardon. She at once greeted him kindly, and with loving words dismissed the past injury. She then turned to her husband, who had begun to accuse himself of his fault, begging him with gentle words not to talk in that way any more, because, as he had committed no sin, there was no need to ask for pardon. And there, kissing each other and weeping for joy, they mingled their hot tears, filled with a great content. Now, while they were all preparing to dance and merrily celebrate their great delight, the knight Girondo approached Fenicia's father, who was so full of joy that he felt that he could have leapt up to reach the sky, and begged that Ser Lionato would grant him a great favour, something that would give Signor Girondo a very great happiness. To which Ser Lionato replied that if it were anything within his power he would very willingly and gladly do it. I desire, then—continued Signor Girondo—that I may have you as my father in marriage, the Lady Fenicia and Lord Timbreo for sister and brother-in-law and the Lady Belfiore, who is here, for my lawful and beloved wife. The worthy father, hearing this new cause of joy and almost beside himself with so much unexpected solace for his trouble, scarcely knew if he were dreaming or if what he heard and saw were really true. And assuring himself that he was really awake, he fervently thanked God who had rewarded him so far above his merit; and, turning to Signor Girondo, replied kindly that he was contented to do his pleasure. He then called Belfiore herself. You see, daughter, he said, how it goes. This knight seeks you in marriage; if you would like him for a husband, and for every reason you ought, I shall be very pleased; but you are quite free to choose. The beautiful girl, with a voice trembling with shyness, told her father that she was ready to do whatever he wished. Thereupon the parents giving their consent, Signor Girondo, not to leave the matter in any doubt, with the proper ceremony and the customary words, gave the ring to the beautiful Belfiore, much to the delight of Ser Lionato and all present. And because Signor Timbreo had espoused his dear Fenicia under the name of Lucilla, he then solemnly wedded her anew under the name of Fenicia. The whole day was then passed in dancing and other diversions. The sweet and lovely Fenicia was clothed in fine white damask, as pure as

snow, with a wonderful headdress marvellously becoming. She was agreeably tall for her age, and her form, though not fully developed owing to her youth, was finely moulded. Her breasts, under the thin drapery of fine silk, showed like two rounded apples becomingly placed. Whoever saw the charming colour of her face, saw a pure and pleasing whiteness with virgin red pleasingly laid on, not by art but by mistress nature, which paled and flushed according to her varying emotions. The heaving bosom seemed a lovely and living piece of alabaster, white and pure, from which rose the rounded throat of snow. But whoever saw the sweet mouth, opening and closing to form the gentle words, could certainly say he had seen an inestimable treasure house girdled with rubies and filled with pearls of orient more rich and beautiful than ever came from the odorous East. If then you met those lovely eyes, like two shining stars, or rather two flashing suns, when she proudly glanced this way and that, you would well have judged that in their glowing light dwelt love, and in that clear splendour trimmed his pointed arrows; and how the waving, curling hair, playing above the broad and noble brow, seemed threads of fine gold, which at the sweet whisper of every little breeze turned themselves wantonly about. Her arms were so perfectly formed, with beautiful hands in just proportion, that even envy could find no fault in them. And, in fine, her whole person was so charming and slender, and so perfectly formed by nature, that nothing was wanting. And when from time to time she lightly moved either part or all of her body, according to the moment, her every act, every gesture and motion, was so full of infinite grace that the hearts of those who saw her were ravished. She was truly named Fenicia, because she was in truth a Phœnix, outshining by far all other beautiful maids. Nor yet a less lovely figure did Belfiore present except that, being younger, she had not so much majesty and grace of carriage. Now all that day was spent in merry-making and feasting, and the two husbands were insatiable in admiring and conversing with their ladies. But Signor Timbreo, above all, rejoiced, and was hardly able to believe that he was really there, thinking that he must be dreaming or that perhaps this was some spell of enchantment woven by magic art. That day ended and the next come, they prepared to return to Messina and there solemnize the marriages as befitted the rank of the two lords. The espoused gentlemen, before setting out, had acquainted a friend, a close attendant of the King, with all that had happened and had requested him to carry out their wishes. On the same day this friend went to do homage to King Peter in the name of the two knights, and to him related their love story, telling all that had happened from beginning

to end, at which the King was greatly pleased. He sent for the Queen, desiring that the whole story should be told over again in her presence, which was faithfully done to the great pleasure and no small wonder of the Queen; who on hearing the piteous tale of Fenicia's sufferings was moved to tears of pity for the poor girl. Now King Peter, more than any other prince of his time, was ruled by a liberal magnanimity and well knew how to reward those who were worthy. The Queen, likewise, being kind and generous, the King opened his heart and told her what he meant to do. The Queen, hearing his generous determination, gladly commended the intention of her husband and lord. He, therefore, diligently caused the whole court to be put in order and all the gentlemen and ladies of Messina to be invited. He then ordained that all the most noble barons of the court, with a large company of other knights and gentlemen, under the care and governance of the Infante, Don Giacomo Dongiavo, his first-born, should go beyond Messina to meet the two sister brides. The whole company, then, splendidly equipped and arranged, rode out of the city, and had not proceeded more than a mile when they met the two brides, who, with their husbands and many other persons, were gaily coming towards Messina. When they had met, the Infante Don Giacomo requested the knights, who had dismounted to pay him homage, to remount their steeds, and in his father's name courteously felicitated them and the two beautiful sisters on their marriages; he himself being received by all with the greatest respect. The greetings of all the courtiers and others of the company from Messina to the two husbands and their brides were not less kind than gracious. The two knights and their wives, while giving all their hearty thanks, reserved for the Infante Don Giacomo their most fervent and grateful acknowledgments. Like a party of friends they then took their way to the city, telling tales and jests as joyous people do. Don Giacomo entertained with gracious words, now the Lady Fenicia, and now the Lady Belfiore. When they drew near, the King, who had been advised of their progress, mounted his horse, and with the Queen and an honourable company of ladies and gentlemen went to meet the gay cavalcade at their entry into the city. After having dismounted to do reverence to the King and Queen all were graciously received. The King, desiring that they should remount, then placed himself between Ser Lionato and Signor Timbreo. Madam the Queen had Fenicia on her right hand and Belfiore on her left, and the Infante Don Giacomo rode with Signor Girondo. All the other lords and ladies, having arranged themselves likewise, they came, side by side, in a noble procession towards the royal palace, that being the King's wish. There they dined sumptuously

and after having eaten, by the commandment of the King and in the presence of all the guests, Signor Timbreo narrated the story of his love. This done, dancing began, and for a week the King kept up the celebrations, desiring that all should remain at the palace as his guests. The merry-making ended, the King sent for Ser Lionato and asked him what dowry he had promised with his daughters, and what means he had of paying it. Ser Lionato replied to the King that he had never boasted of the dowries and that he was ready to give whatever his resource permitted. Then said the King, We wish to give your daughters such a marriage portion as seems to us suitable to them and to our knights, and we do not wish that they should be any further charge to you on account of what has happened. So this magnanimous sovereign, to the admiration not only of the Sicilians, but of all who heard of it, called before him the two husbands and their brides and solemnly desired them to renounce any claim they thought to have had on Ser Lionato, which act of renunciation he confirmed by royal decree. Then without delay he lavishly bestowed on the two brides, not such portions as he would have given to children of one of his citizens, but such as he would have presented to his own daughters; and also increased the yearly grant that the two knights received from him. The Queen, not less generous, liberal and magnanimous than the King, invited the two brides to become ladies of her court, granted them a rich yearly allowance from her revenue and always held them in affection. They, who were truly noble, carried themselves in such wise that, in brief, they were looked upon favourably by all the court. Ser Lionato was then given by the King a very honourable post in Messina, from which he drew no small profit; and as he was getting on in years it was granted in such a manner as to pass to his son. Thus then, was Signor Timbreo rewarded for his faithful love; and the evil that Signor Girondo had attempted was converted into good. Both long enjoyed their ladies, and living in great contentment often sighed with pleasure at the memory of Fenicia's misfortune.

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CAMBRIDGE: PRINTED BY W. LEWIS, M.A., AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS